

# FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX



TOP TEN  
**ESSENTIAL  
ART SKILLS**  
The fundamental rules  
that you've forgotten

*Art advice*  
**Custom brush design secrets**  
Model realistic blood in 3D  
**Comic panels explained**  
Ryan Church video training

*Interview*  
**MARKO  
DJURDJEVIC**  
"I'm enabling my mind, soul,  
heart and psyche to speak  
as freely as they wish"

*Create incredible*  
**SCI-FI ART**

From futuristic characters to apocalyptic wastelands - let your  
imagination run free with our expert digital painting workshops!

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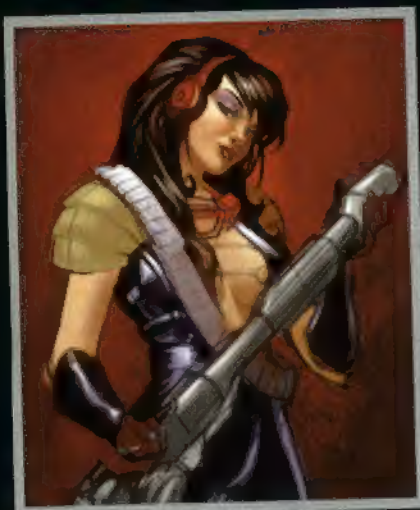




1 After receiving the brief, Patrick sent us a few sketches - two of which you see above.



2 The sketch is decided upon and it's worked up a little further to give us an idea of tonal values.



3 The initial colour rough - but we felt a redhead would be more striking.



4 The hair colour is changed, as is the background. The pose is also tweaked.



The finished cover image.

## Cover artist **PATRICK REILLY**

**COUNTRY:** US

**SOFTWARE USED:**

Photoshop and Painter

**WEB:** [http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/p\\_reillys\\_portfolio](http://community.imaginefx.com/fxpose/p_reillys_portfolio)

We commissioned US-based artist Patrick Reilly to create a stunning sci-fi themed cover. Completed in a matter of days, Patrick has documented the whole process on our website. Find out how the image started off and developed as we gave our input.

View the work in progress thread at: <http://community.imaginefx.com/forums/thread/6214.aspx>

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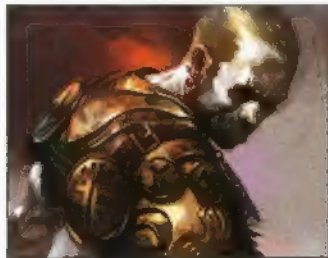
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# Featured artists

ImagineFX calls on the finest digital artists in the world to offer you the best guidance and to share their techniques and inspiration...



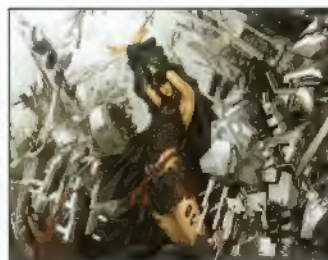
## Marko Djurdjevic



Marko is a renowned comic and concept artist, with clients including Wizards of the Coast and

Marvel. This month, we bring you an exclusive interview with the artist - and Marko is a man not afraid to say what he thinks (turn to page 44). We also bring you a brilliant workshop from Marko - learn how to get rid of your artistic fears on page 68.

[www.sixmorevodka.com](http://www.sixmorevodka.com)



## Skani Srisuwan



Skani Srisuwan is one of the best-known Thai artists. He was our cover star for issue 5, which

showcased his trademark angular, metallic lines. Due to overwhelming demand, this month we bring you an interview with the artist (see page 54). You'll be amazed that he uses a mouse to paint his unbelievably detailed sci-fi and fantasy art.

[www.fiduciose.com](http://www.fiduciose.com)



## Frazer Irving



2000 AD artist and all-round comic art superhero Frazer Irving returns to

ImagineFX this month with a new hat and a plethora of advice on the basics of laying out comic panels. Turn to page 88 for a fundamental lesson in comic storytelling, and look out for more comic art workshops coming soon in ImagineFX.

[www.frazerirving.com](http://www.frazerirving.com)



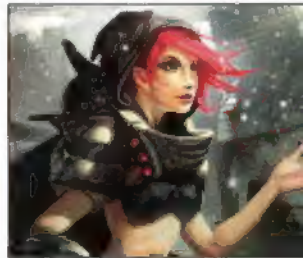
## Brian "Beaux" Beus



The subject of this month's Sketchbook feature (page 58) started out in a different art

form: at school he was a competitive saxophonist, before discovering drawing at the age of 21. Currently he works as a freelancer in the areas of concept design, children's books and portraits. Read all about his early work and WIP on page 58.

[www.beauxpaint.com](http://www.beauxpaint.com)



## Marc Brunet



ImagineFX debutant Marc is a 3D animation student who is passionate about art. While he

studies, he works as a freelance illustrator so he 'can eat once or twice a week!' He believes that to become a good artist requires hours of practice, so he draws most of the time. Check out his awesome painting workshop beginning on page 94.

[bluefley.cgsociety.org](http://bluefley.cgsociety.org)



## Francis Tsai



ImagineFX favourite Francis Tsai has been busy this month drawing on his many years of

experience to bring you 25 essential character design tips (see page 80). If you want to draw character concepts with a sci-fi flavour, look no further. You'll also find some fantastic advice from Francis in this month's Artist Q&A, beginning on page 36.

[www.teamgt.com](http://www.teamgt.com)



# Welcome

## Essential art skills for you!



With the new year well and truly underway, are you sticking to your art resolutions? I've had many artists tell me the importance of doing at least one sketch a day – ImagineFX contributor Andrew Jones did a self-portrait a day for 1,000 days. How's that for dedication?

To help you keep your artistic promises to yourself, this issue is bursting with practical advice and inspirational artwork. For instance, we've got a five-page workshop from the legendary Marko Djurdjevic (p68) – asking you to take the fear out of creation. I know I say this a lot, but believe me, it's unmissable.

Next we have a sci-fi extravaganza. Learn the secrets of crafting cool futuristic characters with Francis Tsai (page 80), how to use the new version of Bryce to create apocalyptic alien wastelands (page 74) and the secrets behind crafting an alien foetus (we call him Feto) in ZBrush on page 84.

We've also got loads of your artwork in our regular FXPosé section (begins on page 10) and some excellent video training from Star Wars artist Ryan Church on the DVD.

Cheers!

*Rob*

Rob Carney, Editor  
rob@imaginefx.com



### Tell us what you think!

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Turn to page 35  
United States readers turn to page 73

## Five things...

you'll find in this issue of ImagineFX

- 1 Have you forgotten?**  
Bobby Chiu runs through his top ten art fundamentals you may have forgotten in your day-to-day drawing and painting **Page 78**
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- 3 Bob Eggleton**  
Meet this month's legend – an artist famous for his amazing dinosaur images **Page 50**



- 4 Bryce-tastic**  
Upgrade your FREE copy of Bryce 5 to the latest version and save cash with our offer **Page 107**

- 5 Brodie's Tales**  
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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

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"I don't need an idol above me to become one" **Marko Djurdjevic (page 44)**



# Reader EXPOSE

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

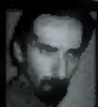
## Ado Ceric

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2



Ado was born in Croatia, 31 years ago: "And the sleepy, calm and serene beauty of my small home town has left its mark upon me for my whole life," he says. It was the forest that did it: "I was endlessly fascinated by that old forest and the mysterious secrets hidden in it."

Even as a child Ado was tempted to draw celestial creatures, which he believed to be hidden into the depths of the woods. "I enjoyed drawing creatures and old trees," he says, "and from there I started to enjoy art more and more."

Until recently this meant traditional materials and techniques. Then, three years ago, Ado discovered digital media. "My horizons expanded." Even now though, he tries to maintain that sense of child-like fascination with world: "I try to find beauty that is hidden around us. I think that's very important for me."

**1 ROGUE** A cyber-punk rogue from a Blade Runner-esque future.

**2 PLAGUE SISTERS** These two charming sisters cause plague across the land: "By using their minions: plague worms."



## ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Ado Ceric wins a copy of Exotique 2, featuring the world's best character art, and Exposé 4, showcasing the universe's finest digital artists. Find out more at: [www.ballisticpublishing.com](http://www.ballisticpublishing.com).

1



Imagine  
ARTIST  
MONTH

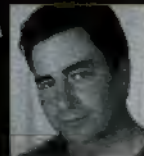


ImagineFX February 2007



## Artist crit

EA's Philip Straub gives his opinion



"Fantasy cityscapes are always a favourite subject of mine so when I first saw Ado's image, Rogue, I was very impressed with the overall execution.

There is a solid sense of scale and action in the piece along with a consistent design language throughout. Overall, great work!"





**Nei Ruffino**

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**SOFTWARE:** openCanvas v.1,  
Photoshop CS2, Painter



"I've always been obsessed with colour," says Nei. "So it's only fitting that now I colour comics as a professional." Nei has been busy colouring for three years, and although she's picked up a lot, she has no illusions: "I've still got a lot to learn!" Colour is clearly important to Nei: "I believe in lots of colour," she insists, "constantly."

There are other factors too, notably a desire to see the world: "I have a horrible procrastinating sense of wanderlust. I want to move away from here, move to another place where things are exciting and new, some place where I can feel like I belong, and find others like me."

**1 CENTAUR ARCHER** "Through time I've always liked to draw centaurs," says Nei. "This is my latest. Probably my best work to date."

**2 GEARS** "Done just because I wanted to paint something with gears, I love the idea of everyday fantasy and I've taken a liking to gears and steampunk stuff too."





1

**Rob Stacy, aka Sinix**

**LOCATION:** US

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**SOFTWARE:** Painter IX



"I'm a true product of the internet age," Rob proclaims. "I got into art four years ago, only after failing at everything else and dropping out of high school, due to creative differences." Rob has had no formal training in art, "but I continually learn at an accelerated rate due to the wonderful community at ConceptArt.org."

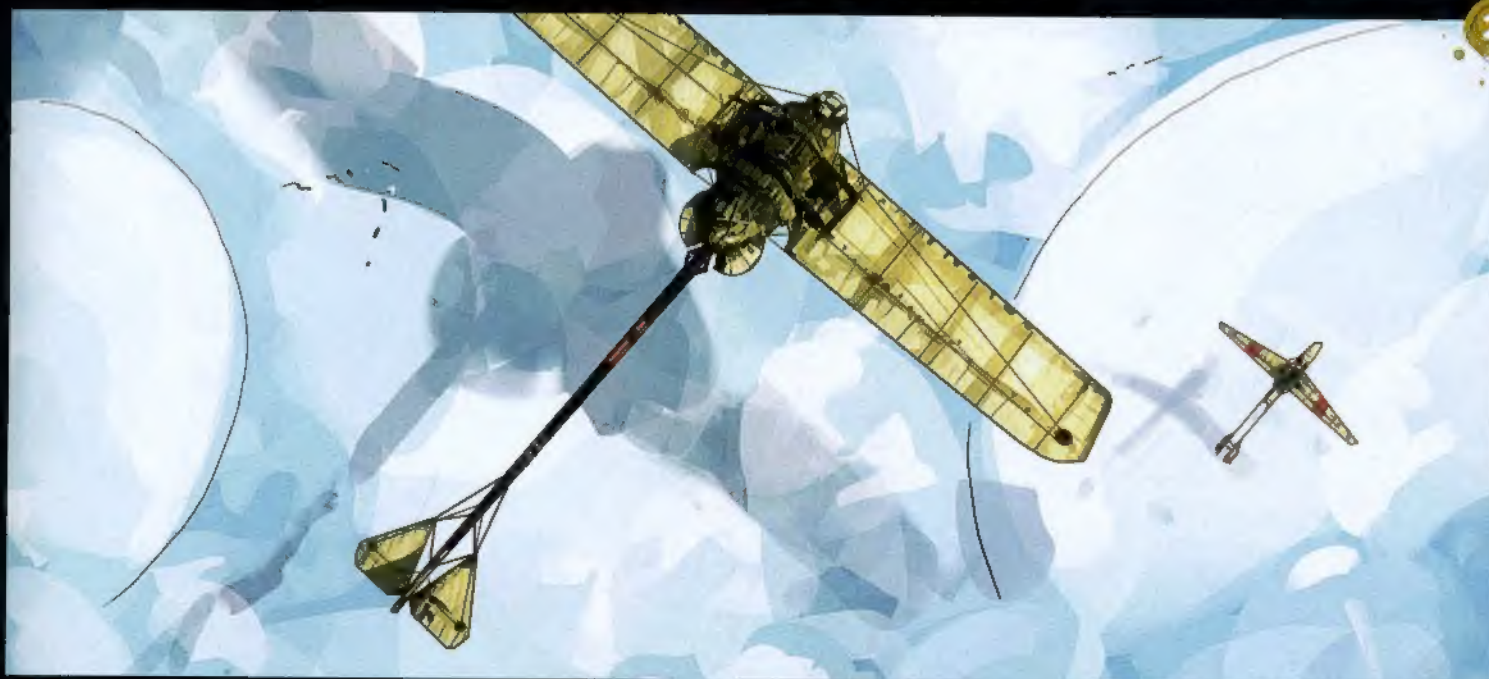
"I still consider myself a student," he adds. "And I haven't begun to truly explore my ambitions yet. I'm looking forward to finding new ways to put forth stories or concepts. I want to explore the way people view life, which, as a secular determinist, may explain some of my interest in violence and mechanical/SF art."

The times are exciting indeed, and the future is bright. For Rob: "global connectivity and digital art technology are ushering in a true golden age. Creativity is a beast we share, individuals feeding off those who came before and morphing old visions into something new, now it's happening at an amazing rate. This is just the start."

**1 DARKSHARK MECH** "I had no idea what this would turn out as when I started," says Sinix. "I started dabbling out a random silhouette and managed to pull a mech out of it. I left it at that."

**2 CARGO GLIDER** A large gliding airship for which Rob used a minimal amount of lines to establish the general outlines, then rendered it through with the Thick and Thin pen.

2



**Jennifer Reagles**

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SOFTWARE: Paint Shop Pro, Painter,  
2ds-max and Poser



A self-taught artist, Jennifer has enjoyed art since she was very young. Her goal is to have a gallery that would showcase digital artists and to finally purchase a graphics tablet, because: "Painting with a mouse can get very tedious!"

"I began experimenting with digital art approximately five years ago," Jennifer recalls. At first she used Paint Shop Pro, and today most of her work is a combination of Paint Shop Pro and Painter, with some elements created in Poser. "I aim to create mystical beauty," says Jennifer, "and if someone views my art and thinks it's beautiful, then all the time spent on it is worthwhile."

These days it's mostly fantasy art, "but I still create some dark art and more traditional works as well." Jennifer has completed several book, CD and magazine covers. She was also featured in the first issue of *Exotique* from Ballistic Publishing and is also in the recently released *Exotique 2*.

**MERA** | "Mera I reflects the beauty of a mermaid and my efforts to make her fluid," explains Jennifer.

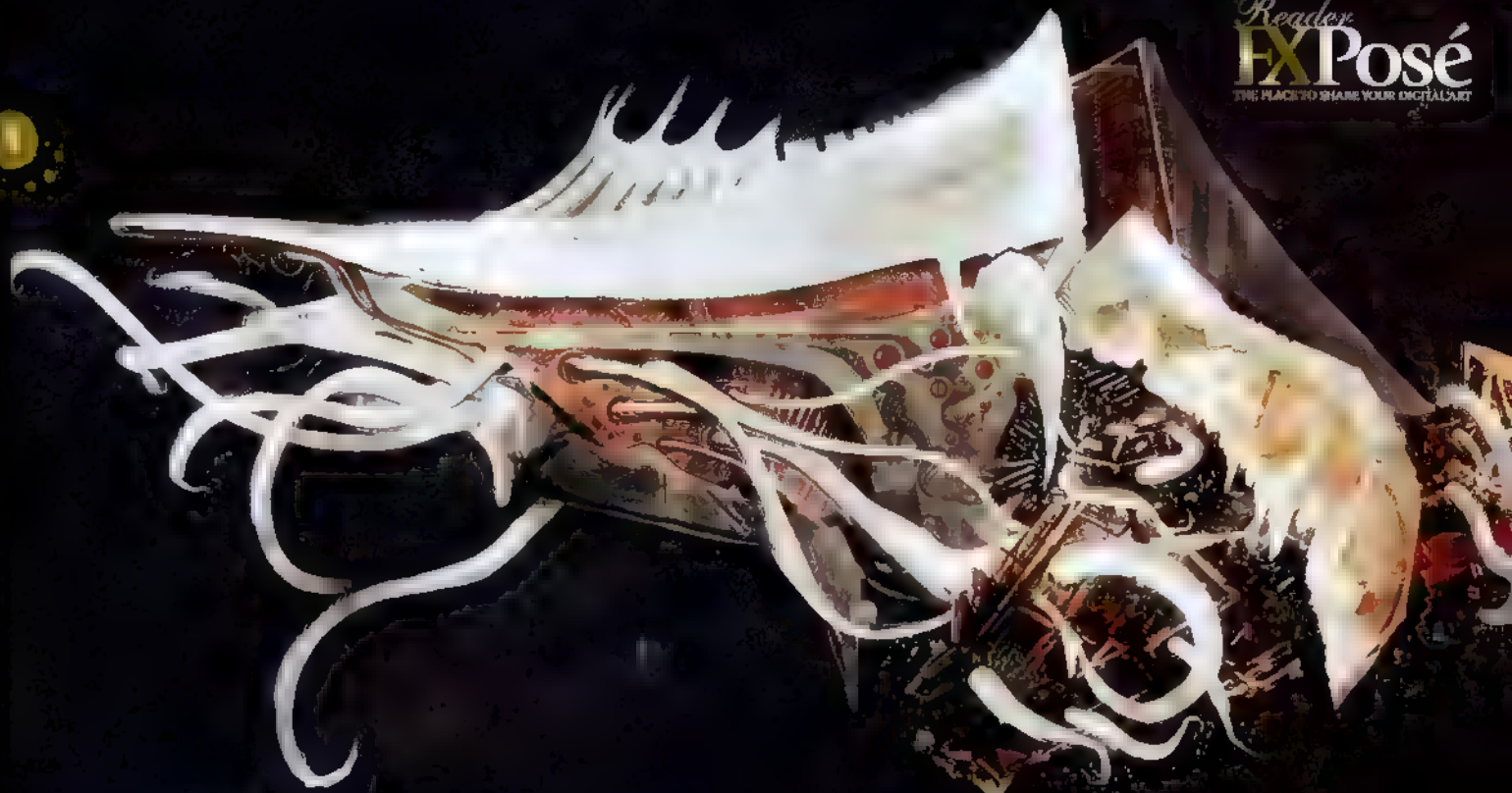
**EX INSIGHT**



"Mera is certainly beautiful, and I love the contrast between the dark, swirling water and the light she's rising up to, like the two sides of a mermaid's personality."

Kay Inglis,  
Production Editor





## Hamish Owen Manton

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS, Maya



Hamish had his biography written by his online fancub. This is the result: "For 8,000 millennia, Hamish sat and meditated in the cosmos, dreaming of perfection. In the swirling space-vapours, He came to know a true art, so perfect as to set him at peace with the universe."

Rejoicing in this new-found bliss, Hamish alighted upon Earth to share this flawless vision with mere mortals. Unfortunately, the market was already oversaturated, and so Hamish resigned himself to drawing shiny space things that went pew-pew. Now at the age of 18 he humbly strives to master his new art with the knowledge that all energy flows according to the whims of the great magnet."

**CTHULHU FHTAGN** A piece based upon the tabletop game *Battlefleet Gothic*, "An unimaginably massive and ever evolving bio-craft devours a lone space cruiser, its tentacles pumping it full of necleonic mutagens."

**2TURNCOAT** Based upon the *Eva-* Online universe: "A heavy assault cruiser brings its guns to bear on a fellow freedom fighter, betraying everything their race has struggled for over the past century in a furious hail of high velocity auto-cannon rounds."



### Lisa Nicole Rye

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**SOFTWARE:** Photoshop CS2



"It wasn't until I was introduced to Japanese animation and games in high school that I found something to focus my drawings on," says Lisa.

"I love Japan," Lisa declares. "I spent a year there on a student exchange program, so much of my art is influenced by Japanese styles." Anime is what Lisa started out with, "But more recently I've tried many different styles that are more realistic or abstract."

This new and varied approach is what keeps art so interesting for Lisa: "With every picture I do, I feel I learn something new."

**1. TIME KEEPER** Time is one of the themes that Lisa is drawn to. "I love mechanical wings, and I wanted to create a picture in which you could see a story unfolding."

**2. SHADOW** "I wanted a darker, more intense feel for this image," explains Lisa. But, like many of her pictures, the story behind the image is left open for the viewer to interpret.





## Santiago Iborra

LOCATION: Spain

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2



Santiago has enjoyed drawing ever since he was a child, "But I never took any kind of serious art education, so I am a self-taught illustrator, and an undisciplined student at that."

Only recently, when he decided "to jump into the abyss" and try to go pro, did Santiago start studying composition, colour theory and anatomy books in a more systematic manner. "I work with pencils and Photoshop," he adds, "using 3D sometimes as a guide when there's a heavy architectural component in the image, to get the perspective right."

Currently trying to improve his use of colour and loosen up his brushwork, Santiago first came into contact with fantasy art through the beautiful art of Elmore, Easley and Parkinson in the old D&D books, and also through Buscema and Windsor-Smith's Conan comics.

**GREYBARK** "The Santharian Dream is a world-building site, where writers and artist add descriptions and illustrations of races, people and places." This picture reminded a lot of people of the film Willow.

**2 ARMEROS, GOD OF WAR** This is one of Santiago's favourite contributions to The Santharian Dream.



## Jakub Kujawa

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**SOFTWARE:** Painter

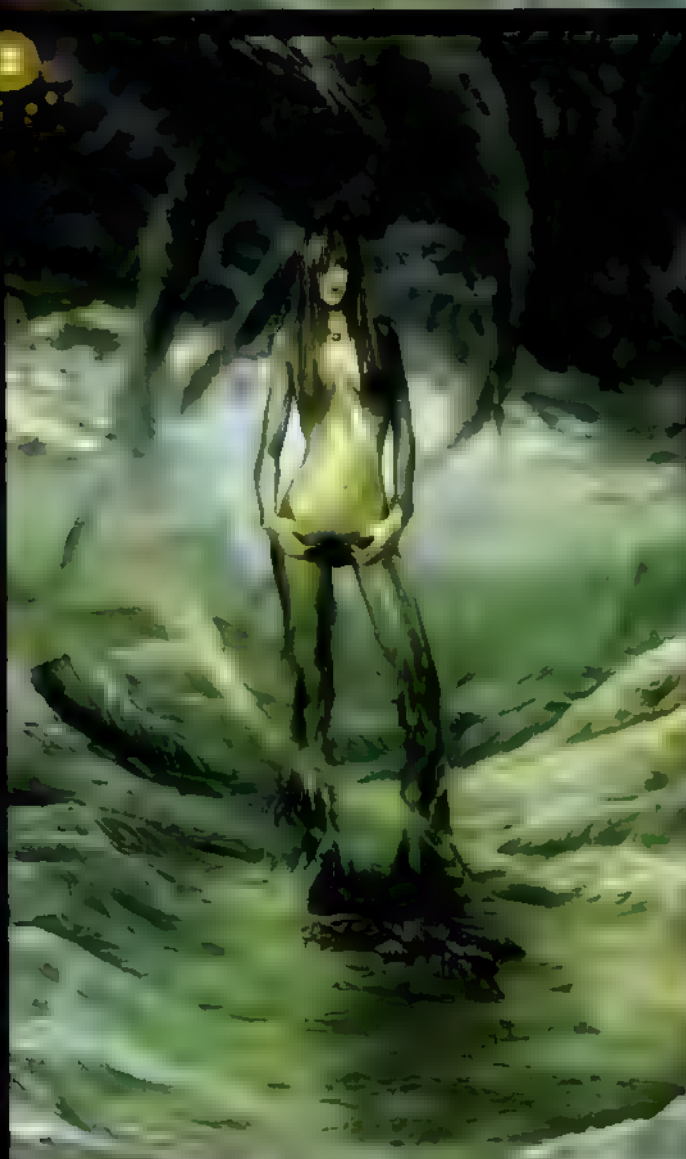


Born in 1985 in Poland, "I've been painting and sketching ever since I remember." Today, after many years of practice, Jakub is attending art school in Poznan, where he's focusing on 3D graphics. When he was 13, Jakub had classical painting lessons. "But a few years later I became interested in fantasy and SF illustration also, and now I'm working in it as a concept art designer and illustrator."

Although Jakub's role as a working artist means working with digital tools, "My favourites are classic media, such as oil painting."

**1. GHOST SHIP** "This is a place that I've made for a contest called Living Things that's held in Poland," says Jakub. "I wanted a very mystic look in this one."

**2. WHIRLPOOL** For this one, Jakub want to create a mystic water queen, "She's appears like she is practically built from water, look at her legs."



### IFX INSIGHT



Whirlpool is a great piece. I love the way the character is portrayed in a casual pose, like a model in a magazine. It adds a certain awkwardness and makes the image overall more intriguing.  
**Marcelo Furquim,**  
Art Editor



### Jeong Mo Yang

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS



Born in South Korea, raised in Argentina, Jeong Mo Yang has been living in Los Angeles for the past 10 years. "My childhood dream

was to create my own comic," says Jeong. "And it's a dream that I'm still pursuing to this very day."

"The beauty about creating your own comic is that you can play God: you get to create your own story, world, and characters." And it was in the process of dreaming up these characters that he began to experiment with digital painting. "And now, I'm completely in love with it."

Currently working as a storyboard artist, and as a comic artist, "I'm also dealing with Tokyopop to put out my own book (called Dyo2 for now), and therefore, fulfill my childhood dream once and for all." At some point, Jeong would like to work as a concept artist for video games, "And after that, become a movie director!"

**D.B.B. (BAD BIG BOY)** Created for a fantasy comic that it's currently being pitched at Tokyopop, "He would play the role of a... bad big boy."

**WARRIOR** "An old warrior that wanders the deserts representing his lost kingdom."



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## Monica Trica

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop CS2



Monica Trica, aka Moniquette on ImagineFX.com, only recently got into digital art – she first picked up a stylus in 2004. "My sources of information were the workshops I found browsing the Internet and various books," she tells us. "It was then I joined several art websites where I received feedback and advice, which meant a lot for my development as a digital artist. I find my inspiration mainly in an imaginary world made of fantasies and dark subjects."

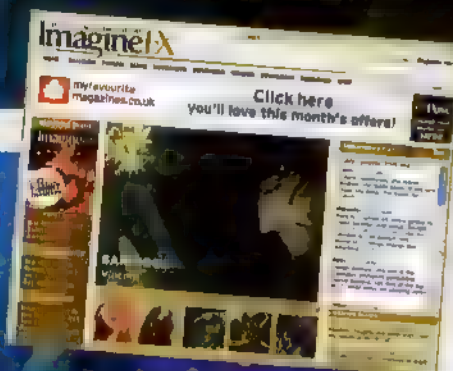
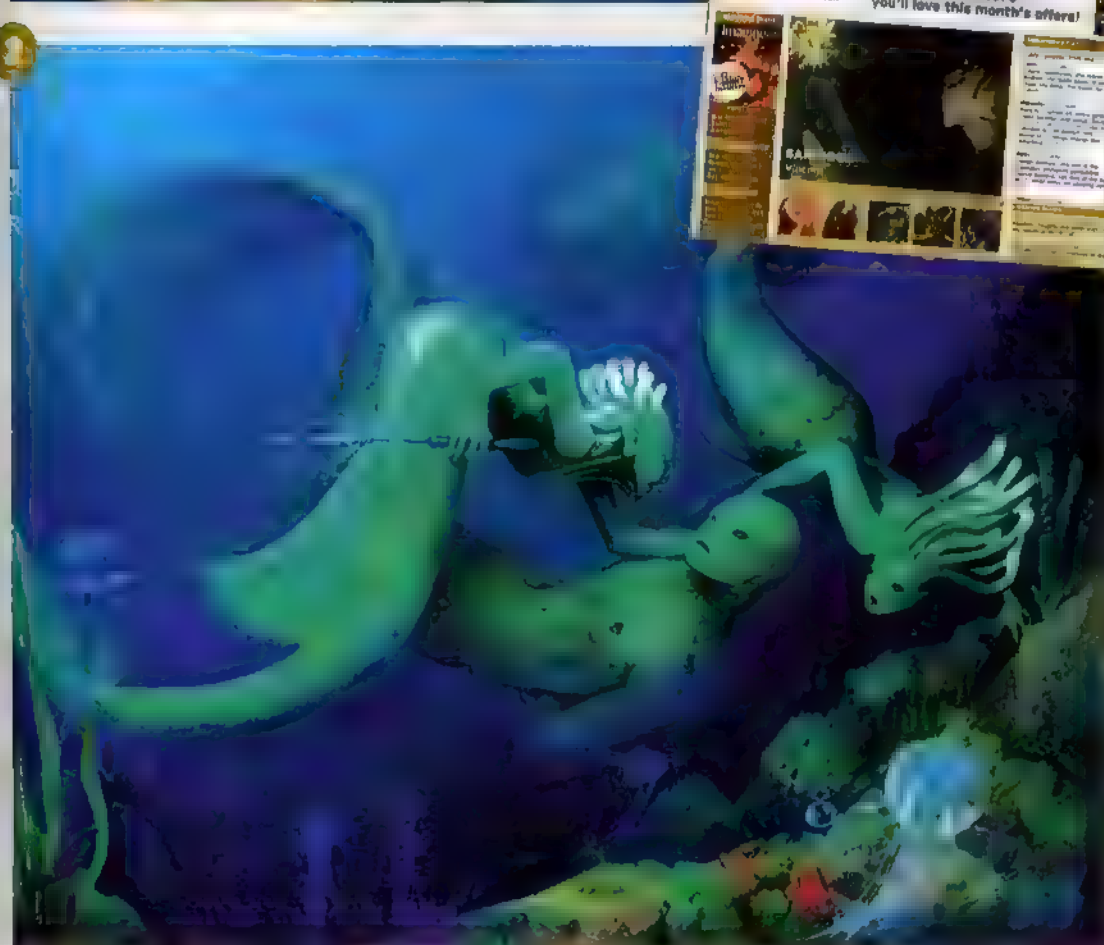
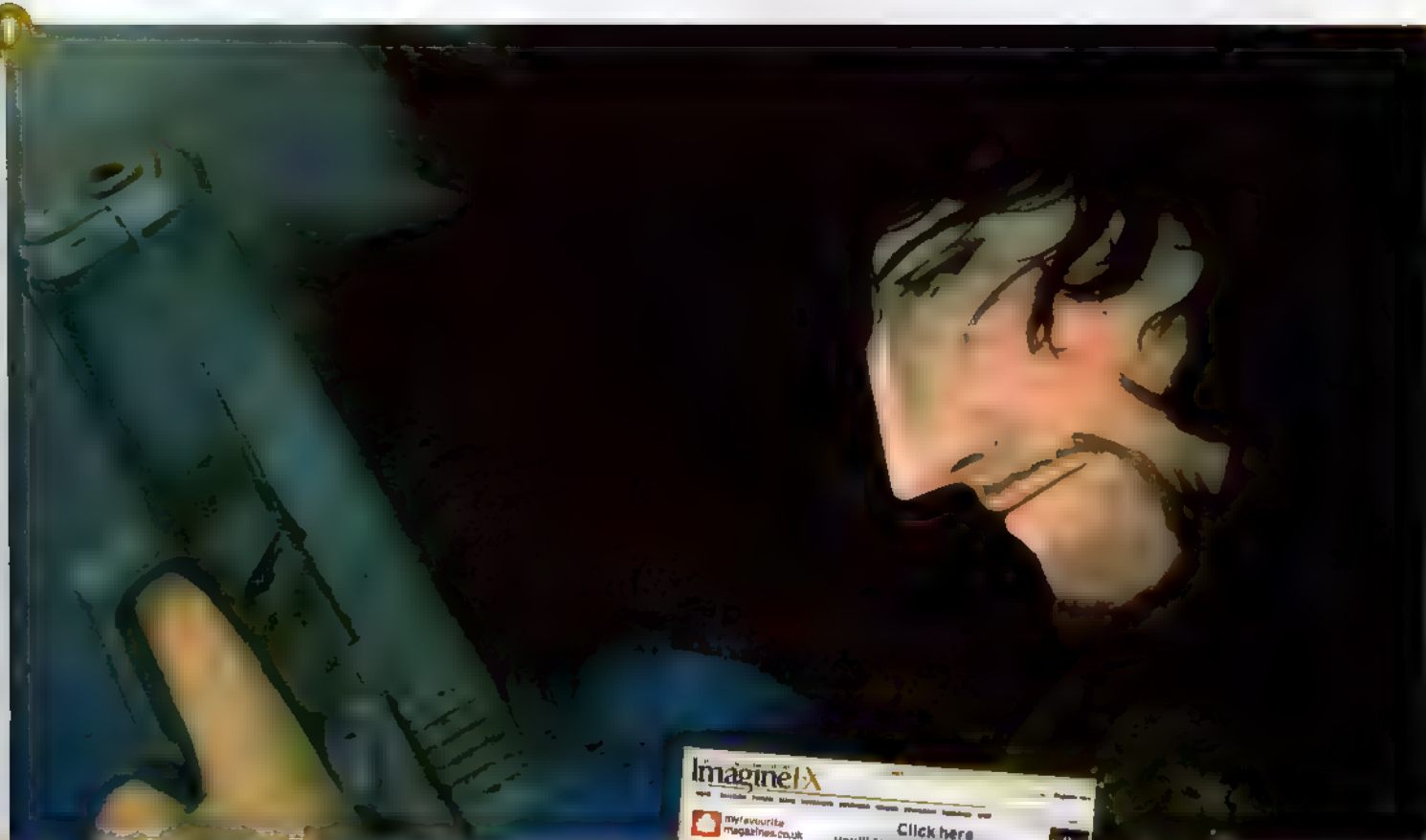
She continues: "Creating art is, for me, a privilege and a necessity at the same time, and this is why I will continue to explore new artistic paths in the future."

### 1 DELICATELY NOT YOURS

"Delicately not yours is an attempt to describe the beauty of loneliness and the sadness of accepting the unavoidable." This is symbolised by the ribbons that tie the character's wrists – and is, as Monica tells us, "a connection between the frail human beauty and the eternity of the stone." She continues "I tried to get a contrast between the simplicity of the theme and the intricate use of details and ornaments. The mood is mainly given by the blue colour tones and the dramatic pose of the central figure."

2 FREEDOM "What's the use of wings when you can't fly with them? What's the use of dreams? Or butterflies?" Monica used photo manipulation techniques in Photoshop CS to create this piece in June 2006.





## **Sam Hogg**

LOCATION: UK

IFX PORTFOLIO [http://community.imaginefx.com/txpose/zephyris\\_portfolio/](http://community.imaginefx.com/txpose/zephyris_portfolio/)

EMAIL [sam@zephyri.com](mailto:sam@zephyri.com)

SOFTWARE: Photoshop and Painter



"At the ripe old age of 27, I can't really recall when I started seeing the world with an artist's eye, but the need to create, to draw and paint is akin to breathing for me, and I'd go insane if I couldn't."

Sam Hogg, aka Zephyri on ImagineFX.com, has a passion for painting. "Having the ability to give life to the visions in your head can be both a blessing and a curse sometimes, but I wouldn't change it for the world. I love what I do."

**1 VINCENT** "I have a real soft spot for bad guys with long hair and face fluff," says Sam. "So when I saw the Cowboy Bebop movie, I knew I'd end up painting its villain: Vincent Volaju. The aim with this speedpaint, done in about five hours, was to give the character a little more realism without losing the anime feel that the original film had. Any excuse to draw bad guys with guns!"

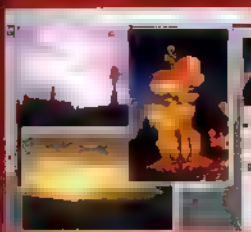
**2 BETRAYAL IN THE SHALLOWS** This started out as an experiment in ArtRage: "with just a mass of slapped-on colour. Back in my preferred Photoshop, my mind spawned a scene, and this species of merfolk were born to inhabit it." ●

ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

# ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY





## PHOTOSHOP CS3 BETA

Adobe has released a sneak preview of its biggest product. Photoshop CS3 Beta is available to download now, for both PC and Mac users. **Page 25**



## DEBOSCH

The latest portfolio of work from artist Deryk Thomas is on sale now. The stunning tome contains the mixture of childlike and disturbing art that makes Deryk's work so controversial. **Page 27**



## BEASTS

This new book from Fantagraphics features a mixture of digital and traditional artists who've created their own take on a range of weird and wonderful mythical creatures. **Page 29**

# Team work

**Successful collaboration** Stuck in an artistic rut? Got artist's block? Need some inspiration and enthusiasm? Teaming up with someone else is a great way to find that missing ingredient...

**The image of the lonely artist toiling away into the small hours of the night is a popular one, but increasingly less accurate in this age of instant global communication. These days more and more artists are collaborating and creating shared work, whether it's a one-off illustration created for an online compo or a comic book series complete with writers.**

But why collaborate in the first place? There are many good reasons, but first and foremost, it's just plain fun – as well as being educational. You may well end up creating something you would never have achieved (or even thought of) on your own.

"When creating something yourself, it's much easier to get the look and feel that you want for your project," says Jeremy Mohler. Jeremy created and runs the online fantasy world of Baeg Tobar ([www.baegtobar.com](http://www.baegtobar.com)), to which artists and writers from

around the world can contribute. As art director, Jeremy has drawn many pieces for the project himself, often in conjunction with other artists.

"That being said, there's something very interesting about actually collaborating and seeing what new ideas develop from the original concept," he continues. "And when you can find a dependable creator, it can be a lot of fun and very worthwhile. Of course, you have to wade through all the flakes and undependable creators out there first."

He makes an important point if you do want to collaborate, it's vital to be sure that everyone else involved shares the same enthusiasm for the work as you do. No matter the scope of your project, there should be a willingness to get it completed to the best of your abilities. It's easy to agree to an exciting-sounding proposition without actually considering the amount of work it may take, and even easier to lose interest halfway through.

The number one golden rule is to do what you say you're going to do 100 per cent of the time, believes John Taddeo. He's the creator and writer of Zoom Suit, the comic book series ([www.superverse.com](http://www.superverse.com)), and is the sole permanent member of the comic's team. "Zoom Suit was completely 'Work for Hire' with everybody on the project except me," he says. "So it was fantastic when I was working with people who cared about the fans enough to make sure we did the best."

## VALLEJO & BELL

Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell share their experiences of collaborating to make astounding art...

**How does the process of collaboration differ to creating something yourself?**

**Julie:** Collaborating on creative work is the best. Of course, it could be a nightmare if you were trying to work with someone you weren't compatible with, but we were made for each other. Working together requires dropping your ego and making the art your priority.

**Boris:** I think that working with my wife is great. Of course we have disagreements from time to time when we're collaborating on pictures, but we always talk about it and resolve our difference of opinion keeping in mind what is best for the painting. One of the big pros is that we can finish a painting in half the time. Truly, I cannot think of a con.

**Are there any 'golden rules' to working with other people?**

**Julie:** It boils down to good communication, whether you know the person well or not. And being impeccably respectful of each other!

**Boris:** Don't argue, listen.

**What would you say you've learned from collaborating?**

**Julie:** I've learned to not worry so much about having my way just for its own sake.

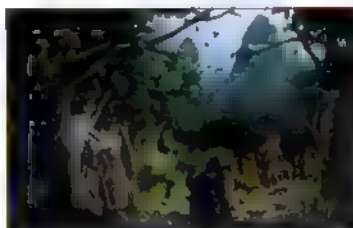
**Boris:** Your own opinion is not always the best – you can learn a lot by keeping an open mind.



You can see a collection of Boris and Julie's fantastic artwork in issue 5 of IFX, where we profiled the duo.

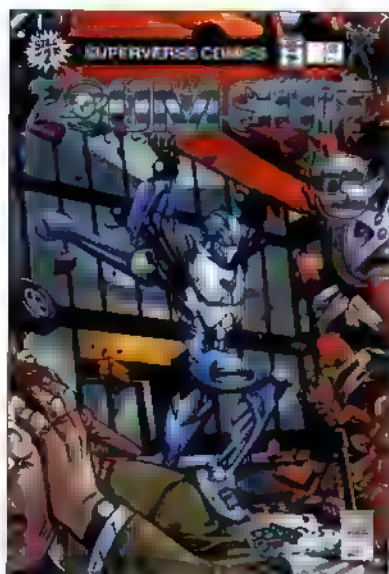
[www.imaginefx.com](http://www.imaginefx.com)

**“You may create something you would never have achieved (or thought of) on your own”**



Jeremy Mohler's online fantasy world of Baeg Tobar is contributed to by artists and writers from around the world.

» Continued from previous page...



Zoom Suit creator John Taddeo says it's vital to do what you say you're going to do.

work possible, and it sucked when some people made it about money or tried to 'hack it out'.

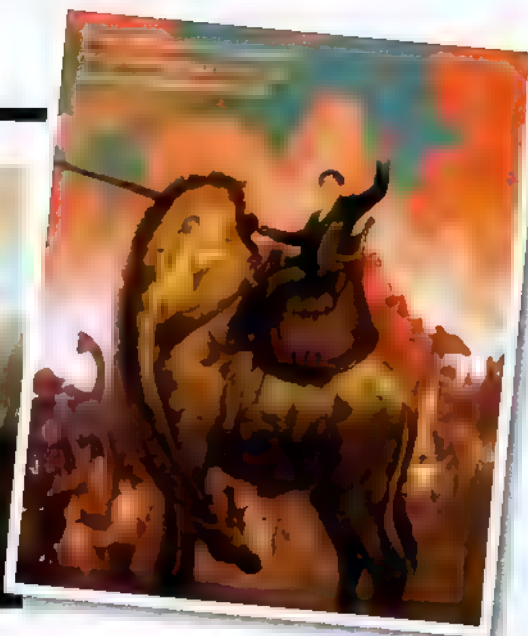
"The pro - and this is a big one - is the creative process does work best when everyone pulls in the same direction," he adds. "It's rare but two heads are better than one - as long as you don't keep banging them together."

So are there any golden rules to collaborating in general? For instance, is it easier to work with a relative stranger or someone you've known for a long time? Ultimately, it doesn't matter because you shouldn't let friendship or personal differences affect your work.

In my opinion it doesn't matter unless you know beforehand that the person is a complete flake with a history of lateness, bad attitude, drugs or otherwise being a screw-up," says John.

Be as descriptive as possible with what you need - don't assume [your collaborator] knows your project well enough to understand what you want," adds Jeremy. "Also, be easy to communicate with - don't let the communication go down."

So be professional, communicate your ideas well and give it a go - you might be surprised at the end result. ■



## Electronic oil

**PC power** How digital tools transformed an image

**Richard Pellegrino, a newly graduated artist, is a busy man. Not content with vowing to produce a painting a day for**



**his blog (richpellegrino.blogspot.com), he's just finished his first book cover for Trial of Flowers by Jay Lake. Along the**

**way, he was introduced to digital tools - with satisfying results.**

The original cover image was created in oils, Richard's preferred medium, but he wasn't entirely sure if it worked. So he sought the advice of his college professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, Jon Foster. Jon is himself a well-respected illustrator with

his own book to his name, so Richard felt sure he was in safe hands.

"We played with the hue/saturation and moved things compositionally," Richard explains. "I brought the piece into Painter and finished up the rest as if it was an actual oil painting while flicking back and forth to Photoshop."

The before and after images shown above demonstrate how a few subtle changes can alter an image's impact such as warming up the colours.

You can see Richard's work at [www.richpellegrino.com](http://www.richpellegrino.com), while Jon Foster's site is at [www.jonfoster.com](http://www.jonfoster.com). Trial of Flowers is published by Night Shade Books.

## Men only artwork

**Male order** The boys are back in town for pin-up contest

**Back in Issue 12 we reported on ConceptArt.org's 'Chicks Who Draw Chicks' Thunderdome competition, an all-female contest to create the site's first official printed calendar. Now, determined not to be shown up by the girls, the lads at CA have bounced back with a compo of their own: a male pin-up calendar compo, aka Males Who Draw Males.**

The rules were simple. Each participant contributed a pin-up picture of a man, based on their own idea of how an attractive hunk should look, with the results being incorporated into an online calendar.

Entries needed to be 'tasteful' and where only males could enter, it was judged by an all-female panel.



Freelance illustrator Glen Ostrander was one of the competition's entrants. "After seeing how wonderful the work

of the girls was, I just couldn't resist. I decided to try and pay homage to the old Saturday Evening Post covers that Norman Rockwell did - but with some of my humour thrown in."

At the time of going to press the competition was drawing to a close. See pictures at [www.conceptart.org](http://www.conceptart.org).

This month  
**ImagineFX**  
lives...

**T-shirt transfers**  
- We want to see pics of you wearing your free T-shirt transfers from issue 13.  
<http://community.imaginefx.com/forums/thread/7287.aspx>

**The Legend of Zelda** - We've been playing Twilight Princess a bit too often... Well, some of us.  
[www.zelda.com/universe/games/legendzelda/](http://www.zelda.com/universe/games/legendzelda/)

**Cups of tea** - You should see how many we drink each issue.

**Patrick Reilly** - Our fabulous cover artist  
See page 3



Glen Ostrander's take on the pin-up theme is vying for the December slot.



CHRISTMAS

# Photoshop CS3 beta

Software trial Sneak peak at Adobe's latest graphics package

During the last year Adobe has become much less restrictive about showcasing early versions of its products, thanks mainly to Lightroom. But in an unprecedented move, it has now released a sneak peek of its biggest product: Photoshop.

An early public beta of Photoshop CS3 is available for download from the Adobe Labs site. The beta is available for both PC and Mac, with the latter version being a universal binary. That means it will run

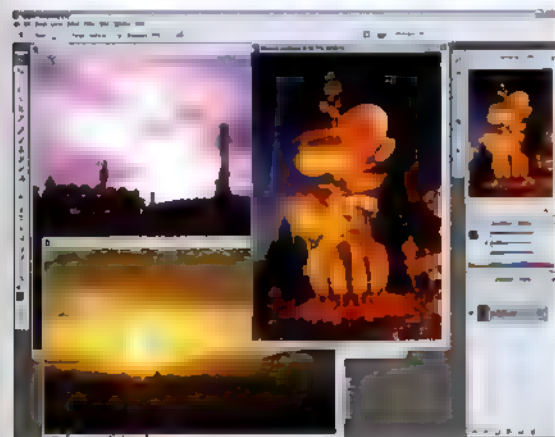
natively on new Intel-based Macs (as well as older PowerPC models) and will take advantage of their increased speed.

Reports indicate that Adobe is also developing an advanced version of Photoshop CS3, with extra capabilities for the video and scientific markets.

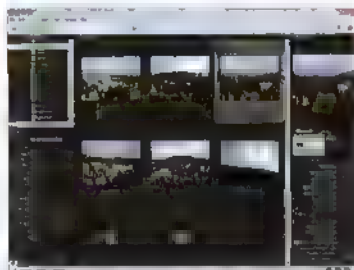
Download the beta from <http://labs.adobe.com/technologies/photoshopcs3/>. The beta lasts two days, to extend it, you'll need a valid serial number for a CS2 app

## ARTIST INSIGHT

"The new UI looks great and should help free up screen space for my paintings. The quick selection tool, where you 'paint' selections, is a wonderfully flexible feature."  
— Jonny Duddle  
Concept artist



The Photoshop CS3 beta sports a new style of interface, though the basic layout remains much the same as before.



The new Adobe Bridge has a slightly different look, in keeping with the UI redesign.

# Great characters

Comprehensive guide Marko Djurdjevic's DVD debut

Training DVDs are a useful tool, especially when they are presented by a well-respected artist, but like many walkthroughs these DVDs don't always teach you the why as well as the how. Art studio and training company Massive Black aims to avoid that pitfall with its new range of conceptual art DVDs, which is kicking off with Character Ideation by Marko Djurdjevic.

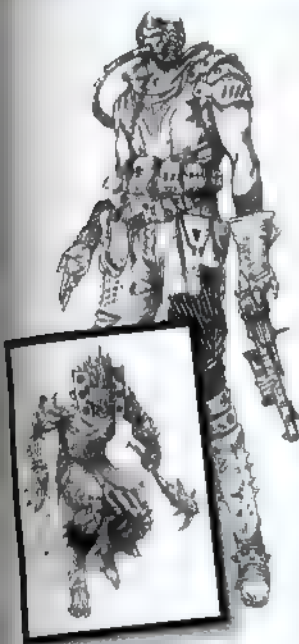
"I guide the viewer through designing four complete characters from start to finish," he says. "The DVD functions more on an inspirational level, instead of a paint-by-numbers approach. This leaves a lot of room for creativity."

Part of that creativity is understanding how a character can be fleshed out from a basic concept as well as simply being able to draw one.

"It delves into my artistic approach towards certain subjects and how to develop your ideas more consistently," he adds.

It also has a few quick tips and a documentary, plus a portfolio featuring many works from the past three years.

Character Ideation is nearly three hours long and is available from <http://tinyurl.com/y538pe> for \$45. Read more about Marko on page 44, and see his art at [www.sixmorevodka.com](http://www.sixmorevodka.com)



The Freak and the Gunner are two of the character concepts Marko discusses in his DVD.

## Miami85

Undead art Zombies on your mobile phone

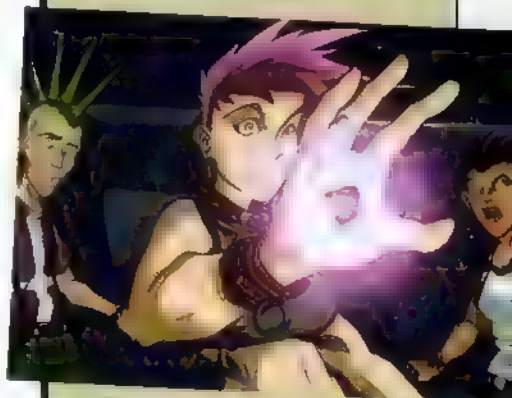
Miami85 is a new animated series for mobile phones, described as a cross between Miami Vice and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. It's set in 1985 and involves three punk kids unravelling a supernatural plot to take over South Beach – and hordes of zombies, of course.

Creator Marc Shahboz based the series on his own experiences of growing up as a punk – though presumably without any undead interference. "The city itself is so infused with different cultures, languages and types of people that it really gave me a wide palette to draw from, not to mention, a thriving punk rock scene and cocaine Cowboys shooting up the place," he says.

The series was originally written as three one-hour episodes, but Marc and his company, Humouring the Fates, eventually decided to break it up and release it as three to four minute episodes for the mobile market. Frames are hand-drawn, then scanned and animated in the professional package RETAS! PRO, which Marc says is "used by 95 per cent of the studios in Japan. We also use most of the Adobe tools, Maya and Final Cut to name just a few."

"I did not want to make Miami85 a straight horror piece; I wanted it to be fun," he adds. "I'm a huge fan of Joss Whedon (Buffy, Angel, Firefly) and really like the idea of mixing elements of horror with comedy."

Find out more about the series at [www.miami85.com](http://www.miami85.com)



Miami85's three main heroes – soon to be battling zombies on your mobile phone.

## IS IT BEAUTY, OR A BEAST?

Playing God and defining the 'perfect' female form

By Cyril Van Der Haegen

In this short stub, we shall see how the canon of beauty is manipulated in advertising and, by association, in the fantasy genre. About 23 millennia ago, artists already represented the female figure in stylised form (see Venus of Willendorf, below). Art has shown throughout the ages, through the eyes of male artists mostly, how the perception of beauty is to be understood by the masses. In modern time, we are witnessing the swift, aberrant and often forced changes of the new canonical proportion of the perfect body. From the zaftig female figures of the 19th century to the anorexic-looking models of the late 1990s, we are thematically inundated by the latest depiction of "perfection."

Interestingly enough, the representation of the idealised male body hasn't changed much in time: muscular, tall, oiled. The female body, however, is continuously being manipulated. Putting aside the notion that it might be some sort of subconscious phallic form of control or simply a marketing ploy, artists are in general the engineers of those fashionable changes, and thus have to understand that the promotion of such images is truly their responsibility, which includes the potential negative social consequences (such as the self-esteem issue, Barbie syndrome, and so on...)

Well, it's always fun to play God.

The Venus of Willendorf is approximately 23,000 years old  
Image © NHMPL, 2006



Do you agree with Cyril?  
Log on to our forum at  
[www.imaginefx.com](http://www.imaginefx.com)  
and let us know.

[www.sagehal.org](http://www.sagehal.org)

## Body-building made easy

Go figure New digital tools for the fine artist

e-frontier is expanding on its Poser line with the release of Poser Figure Artist, a tool especially designed to help with creating the human figure. Based on Poser technology, the app enables you to choose from the many 3D figures included, pose it, and view it from various angles.

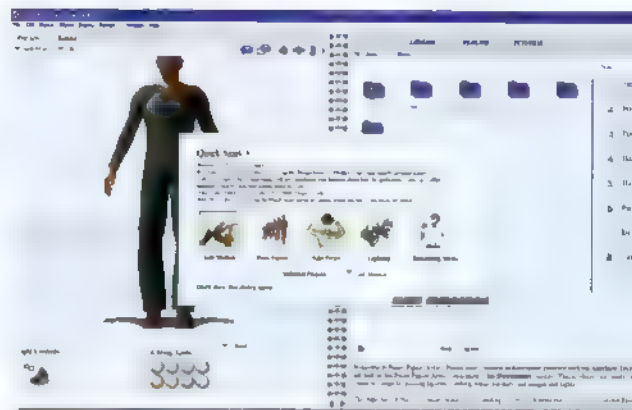


Unlike Poser, PFA is a med more at traditional and mixed-media artists. Essentially, it replicates the use of

wooden mannequins or live models with 360 degree viewing

New features include on-screen visual aids to help with composition, such as the horizon line and vanishing points and a head-length guide

"I was extremely sceptical about Poser Figure Artist's place in a fine



art studio," said artist and beta tester Linda Helfritsch. "[But] I was happy to discover that working from a computer-generated image could provide me with so much detail."

Poser Figure Artist is available for \$100 for PC (with Mac version coming soon). See [www.e-frontier.com/go/poserfigureartist](http://www.e-frontier.com/go/poserfigureartist) for more

Creating a human figure is a simple task with the powerful new tools in Poser Figure Artist

## Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"Life is a pot full of shit with a glaze of honey on top. Once you lick all the honey away, you have to eat shit for the rest of your life."

Mario Djundjic explains an urban Serbian saying on page 44

## Coming to heal

Creative therapy Innovative charity promotes mental health through art

For most people, art is a relaxing hobby or a way to make a living. But it can be much more than that, as the organisers behind Artists in Mind (AIM) have discovered.

AIM is a charitable group that helps to relieve sickness and protect mental health through the use of the arts. It works with people who have acute or long-term mental health problems creating sanctuaries in which the patient can express themselves in whatever way they like. Part of the process involves mentoring by professional artists



Minder Singh, whose work was featured in issue 10's FXPosé on the DVD, is one of the artists involved

with the scheme "Artists in Mind help me loads with my art," he says "They provide me with art equipment and a studio space to work in and be creative"

Minder cites the main inspirations for his bold, comic book-style work as Simon Bisley, Simon Harrison, Bernie Wrightson and others

As AIM's founder John Holt says, "Creativity is the immune system of the mind and the source of the mythic." To find out more about AIM and its work, visit [www.artists-in-mind.org.uk](http://www.artists-in-mind.org.uk)



Minder Singh, as featured in ImagineFX, is just one of the artists who have benefited from Artists in Mind.

# DeBosch

**Perverse pleasure**  
A dream of dark  
and troubling things...

Even in the world of dark,  
sometimes troubling fantasy art,  
Deryk Thomas's work is not for  
everyone. The artist who once  
dreamed of being a children's



illustrator creates a  
unique mixture of  
the childlike and  
the disturbing,  
often featuring  
subject matter that could be  
deemed controversial.



Deryk melds traditional images of childhood  
fantasy with disturbing, grotesque visions  
to create his unique and controversial art

Long rejected by the  
commercial world, it's a measure  
of Deryk's current standing that  
his latest portfolio, DeBosch, is  
being sold as a limited edition of  
25 for no less than £1,750 each. It  
consists of 100  
densely illustrated  
A3 pages of black  
ink on white paper  
and represents five  
years of his life

"The work is  
perverse," says  
Deryk, "DeBosch is  
a flowing stream of  
consciousness/  
unconsciousness  
inspired by  
whatever  
environment  
I found myself  
working in at the  
time. I literally made it up as  
I went along, drawing in response  
to whatever I encountered and felt  
in any given day"

Deryk says he's unable to create  
a particular style of drawing or  
painting to order, a realisation  
he made when trying to be a

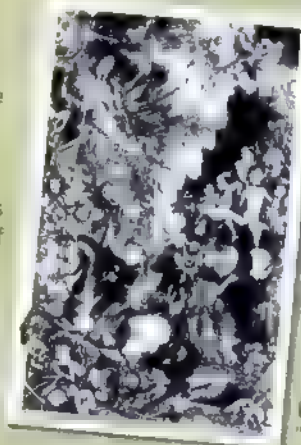
commercial illustrator many years  
ago. All his commissions were  
rejected for being too disturbing:  
a vase of flowers, a brochure

illustration of a  
family out  
shopping. "Now he  
simply creates what  
he feels and draws  
on a deep well of  
inspiration from  
George Cruikshank  
and William Hogarth  
to Hans Belmer and  
Edvard Munch

"I pay a lot of  
attention to my interior  
and I work in a very  
private way," he adds  
"If you meet me in the  
flesh, I am precisely my

work... lovely, gentle and kind -  
and dark, scarred and disturbing  
in equal measure. I'm sure we all  
are to varying degrees"

You can see more of Deryk's  
stunning work at [www.derykthomas.com](http://www.derykthomas.com)



**The sky is not the limit.**



[www.vue6.com](http://www.vue6.com)



## Face off

Sincere apologies to both  
Michael Dashow (left) and Patri  
Balanovsky... we mistakenly put  
Patri's picture next to Michael's  
details in issue 12. Here they are  
the right way round. We hope,  
Sorry again guys.



## In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists

### X-Men artist dies Dave Cockrum RIP

Comic book artist Dave Cockrum has died, aged 63. He was best known for overhauling the X-Men series, together with writer Len Wein, after the series's disappointing start in 1963. After a long illness with diabetes complications, Cockrum passed away in his favourite chair in his home in South Carolina.  
[www.davecockrum.net](http://www.davecockrum.net)

### Manga iPod iSkin

Fancy some manga-themed protective coverings for your 30GB Video iPod? iSkin has just released a second issue of its tokidoki range, Vibes, featuring eight designs from trendy designers and a durable, shock-resistant layer for your precious. The Vibes cost \$30 each.  
[www.iskin.com/vibes](http://www.iskin.com/vibes)

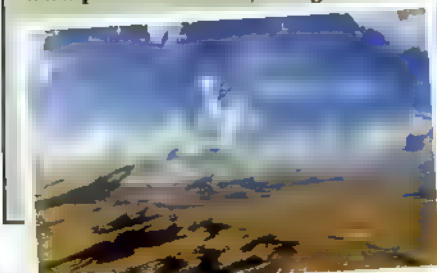


### Ghost movie Deadman

Warner Bros is reportedly set to work on a feature film adaptation of the DC Comics series Deadman. The script will be written by newcomer Gary Dauberman and rumours have Guillermo del Toro, of Hellboy and Pan's Labyrinth fame, as director. Deadman is the ghost of a murdered acrobat who sets out to avenge his death.

### Software preview Terragen 2

The Technology Preview of Terragen 2 is now available. This sequel to the popular landscape visualisation software promises a host of new features plus photorealistic rendering of your creations, including volumetric clouds and importing of 3D objects. The full version is due later this year.  
[www.planetside.co.uk/terrigen](http://www.planetside.co.uk/terrigen)



## Spectrobes

Game on Anime comes to the small (double) screen

While anime and manga are growing in popularity across most media, the world of video games features surprisingly few examples of the graphic style, outside of a few specialist Japanese titles. Spectrobes, a forthcoming Disney game for the Nintendo DS, looks set to change that.

Spectrobes is a classic SF tale featuring a couple of anime heroes who must find and tame the eponymous beasts. The game was always envisaged in the style of



both Japanese anime and traditional art design. "I feel that it's long had the ability to both emotionally move and fascinate a broad spectrum of people," says the game's producer, Kenji Hara.

So why are there so few games currently using this style? "I think it's because until the release of the Nintendo DS, there wasn't a truly suitable piece of hardware for expressing Japanese animation style," he explains. "This market has

always sought out high end 3D computer graphics.

He adds that all the artists working on the game shared this love of anime. True artists strive for originality during the creative process and 'I'm proud that the Spectrobes team never wavered from that ideal'.

The game's released in March and there's a sample on your DVD  
[www.spectrobes.com](http://www.spectrobes.com)



The heroes of Spectrobes must find and tame a series of beasts.

## Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce

The depressed rectangle and the indecisive triangle					
Ohhh noooo!	What Can We do?	I can't Cope	I find decision Making Really hard	I'm dying From the Inside	I guess we could go to the Seaside
My Insides are turning into Metaphorical Mush		The Seaside Could be nice maybe oh I don't know!		Mush that will be spread onto the great Sandwich of Self Pity to be picked over by the vultures of my mind	
Maybe make a Sand Castle		Oh depression how I raise my fist at you for Making me this way!			actually the Seaside could be a bit rubbish i'm not sure if I want to go now

[www.mattboyce.com](http://www.mattboyce.com)

# Beasts

**Creature discomforts** New Fantagraphics book

If you're looking for inspiration for your own fictional creature – whether it's derived from a real world animal or not – **Beasts** is a must-browse. The new book, from Fantagraphics, collects the imaginings of a variety of artists across many media. Each presents their own particular take on a mythical animal, albeit ones which various cultures believe to exist.

Along with the usual werewolf, unicorn and such, there are weirder creatures such as the Tu De-a-Gau from the South Pacific Islands, the deer-like Janach from Scotland, and the ta-an Calus. Each artist was invited to choose a beast and contribute with no limitations on their designs, and the result is a fascinating mixture of styles from the likes of Gilbert Hernandez, Nathan Huang, and Nathan Jurevicius.

"The goal was to avoid genres," says Jacob Covey, the book's designer and editor. "To keep the artwork the best possible without regard to an overall style to the book."



We have 90 artists generally derived with a diverse array of commercial and fine art trends from skate graphics, rock posters, comics, children's book illustration, fine art, even a regular *Playboy* contributor.

Although by no means all of the entries in **Beasts** were created digitally, many of the artists employed digital tools for their images. For instance, James Jean puts off this painterly effect although, I know, he uses a great deal of digital alteration," says Jacob.

**Beasts** is available now from Fantagraphics, priced \$29. See more at [www.fantagraphics.com](http://www.fantagraphics.com)



Drac by Nathan Jurevicius, Succubus by James Jean and The Hundred-Handed Giant by Little Friends of Printmaking

# ArtRage

Stylish, realistic painting on Windows and OS

- 12 tools, including Oils, Airbrush, Glitter, Pencils, and Pen
- Tool settings let you add thinners to paint, soften your pen, apply metallic paint, and more.
- Layers, layer blend modes, PSD import and export.
- Load Reference Images and pin them to your canvas.
- Create custom colour pickers and colour swatches.
- Easy to use interface that gets out of the way while you work so that you can focus on creating.
- Supports Windows 2k, XP & Vista, and OSX 10.3 or over. Universal Binary for PPC or Intel Mac.

\$19.95

[www.artrage.com](http://www.artrage.com)

## Events

### FANTASY & SCI-FI ART SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD

#### CAPRICON

**DATE:** 8-11 February  
**URL:** [www.capricon.org](http://www.capricon.org)  
Capricon 27 is a "celebration of high fantasy," so expect lots of medieval knight-related japey, with a touch of the 21st century provided by anime screenings and the art show. Erin McKee is the artist guest of honour at the Sheraton Chicago Northwest Hotel, Illinois.

#### FARPOINT

**DATE:** 16-18 February  
**URL:** [www.farpointcon.com](http://www.farpointcon.com)  
Aiming for a return to the way fandom used to be, the long-running Farpoint is a sci-fi media convention with the emphasis on friendliness and fun. Along with various TV bods, you can meet Bob Greenberger, editor at DC Comics, and mingle at the art show. At the Baltimore Marriott Hunt Valley Hotel in Maryland.

#### BOSKONE

**DATE:** 16-18 February  
**URL:** [www.nesfa.org/boskone](http://www.nesfa.org/boskone)  
A regional sci-fi convention encompassing literature, art, music and gaming. The official guest artist is illustrator Gary A Lippincott, who'll display work at the art show along with many other artists. Expect discussions, critiques, duelling easels and more, at the Westin Waterfront hotel, Boston.

#### CONDFW


**DATE:** 23-25 February  
**URL:** [www.condfw.org](http://www.condfw.org)  
Although it's a literary sci-fi and fantasy convention, ConDFW does include a hefty art show, along with a dealer's room and other art-related activities. Art guest of honour is Bob Eggleton. Get ye to the Radisson Hotel Dallas North-Richardson, Richardson, Texas.

#### FURRY WEEKEND ATLANTA, US

**DATE:** 16-18 February  
**URL:** [www.furryweekend.com](http://www.furryweekend.com)  
It's the "Deep South's Anthropomorphic Exposition" - or, in less grandiose terms, a con for fans of furies. Special guest artists include the splendidly named Strider Orion and Daria McGrain, both big names in the specialist furry comic sphere. At the Sheraton Gateway Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia.

**IF YOU KNOW OF ANY FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, PLEASE SEND US THE DETAILS. EMAIL THEM TO THE EDITOR AT: [EVENTS@IMAGINEFX.COM](mailto:EVENTS@IMAGINEFX.COM)**

#### KEI-KON, CANADA

**DATE:** 23-25 February  
**URL:** [keikon.cjb.net](http://keikon.cjb.net)  
 An anime and gaming convention that's now in its fifth year, run for and by fans. Along with extensive anime and game activities, there's a dealers' room, contests, fan parodies, hentai (ooer) and much jolliness to be had. At the University of Victoria on Vancouver Island.

#### MEGACON, US

**DATE:** 16-18 February  
**URL:** [www.megaconvention.com](http://www.megaconvention.com)  
 A massive con covering comics, TV, film, gaming and anime. There are lots of top illustrators to learn from, including Jeremy Maoney, manga artist for Fist of the North Star, who'll be talking about his experience of landing his dream job, plus a host of other comic artists. Held at the Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida.

## Last year I went to...

### MEGACON 2006

**COMIC MAESTRO ANDREW LOVUOLO ON THE HUGE SHOW THAT OFFERS COMICS AND MORE**

This is the fifth year in a row we've attended the Sci-fi Comic Book MegaCon convention in Orlando, Florida ([www.megaconvention.com](http://www.megaconvention.com)), as exhibitors in Artists' Alley. It's become an annual micro-vacation for us from the much colder Boston winters. Last year's event was one of the better iterations of the show, which mixes the familiar talented artists and friends who rent tables around us with the equally familiar faces of merchandising vendors who travel the circuit.

Aside from the rare opportunities to meet classic stars and to network with fellow comic book artists and writers, MegaCon gives us the chance to catch up with friends we've met along the way that we're now working alongside, such as Robert Richardson, Chris Harden, Robert Atkins, and others.

Meeting the fans is always a highlight of this show. They breathe life into the industry like no other fanbase. Whether they're in costume or plain clothes, there's nothing like introducing new readers to your creative works and getting instant feedback. Being the writer of *The Rift* and *Marshal*, it's nice to use these rare public appearances to get back to drawing personal sketches for a select few collectors of comics and comic book artwork. Every year it inspires us to continue putting new books and concepts out there for everyone to read and enjoy.

The event continues to evolve as the comic book industry does the same. We look forward to having new issues printed for the upcoming 2007 show and to debuting our very first action-figure control art for Shocker Toys' Indie Spotlight in person in February.



Andrew LoVullo (codename: Blade) from Boston, US, is the creator of *The Rift* and *Marshal*, two of the titles from Graphic Illusions Studios.

[www.giustudios.com](http://www.giustudios.com)

### REDEMPTION OF UK

DATE: 23-25 February

URL: [www.conventionredemption.co.uk](http://www.conventionredemption.co.uk)

redemption



After a year of no con, we're focusing on the TV series *Blakes 7* and *Babylon 5*, plus a wide range of other sci-fi topics. The legendary Doc O'Bannon is one of the guests of honour, and there's an art show, fancy dress, videos, talking and so on. It takes place at Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, Leicestershire.

### SAKURA EXPO LYON, FRANCE

DATE: 16-18 February

URL: [www.sakura-expo.com](http://www.sakura-expo.com)

Interested in manga or other Japanese culture such as anime and cosplay? Think you can manage some reasonable French? Then this expo might be for you. All the usual delights of a manga celebration await you at the Double-Mixte, Lyon, France.

### MULLUS ANXIETAS, AUSTRALIA

DATE: 9-11 February

URL: [www.ausdwcon.com](http://www.ausdwcon.com)

Confused by the title? You shouldn't be if you're a Terry Pratchett fan. This is the Australian Discworld Convention for 2007. Mr P himself will be there, and though there's no show as such, there's plenty of costuming and other mad stuff. Make your way to the Carlton Grand Hotel in Melbourne, Victoria.

# Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Rob Carney, on [rob@imaginefx.com](mailto:rob@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

## In praise of Lee

First off I want to say that I picked up my first issue of ImagineFX and I am totally blown away by the diversity, quality, and I have been inspired more than ever to sit down and get my work to evolve to a new level!

I'm dying to get started with the workshops too, I've got very little Photoshop/digital experience and have been plodding along with pencils and inks (all self taught) for the past few years teaching myself a lot of things, and drawing from inspirations.

### FROM THE FORUM AT

This month's topic...  
**Chliszcz's finished 2D piece**

Matrix. Photoshop and tablet. Study of palm and autoportrait. Inspiration for me was the Matrix movie. *chliszcz*

This is ace. I love the photo-realism. The scratches on the spoon are great. Do you plan to do a background? *mysterybowler*

Holy crap! I don't like to pick at something this great but the thumb does look kind of awkward to me. Still this is a brilliant study. *Echo*

That's great! How did you do the scratched surface of the spoon? *Mie*

Wow! Amazing work on the hand... I had to look twice to realise it was drawn. The spoon is also very well done and I like the over all minimal composition, very in keeping with some of the film's imagery. *zephyr*

There is no spoon... *buckie*

I wondered how long it would take for someone to say that. *mysterybowler*



## DID YOU MISS ISSUE 13?

See page 91 for details on how you can get your hands on it.

– **Subscribe and get 35% off!**



I read the magazine cover to cover, and found a few things amusing. Firstly, two of my favourite artists are featured on one page – Alexander Maleev and Tim Bradstreet! Great going! These guys are inspirational icons, and great artists to boot. But because of you, I now have a new favourite artist – Lee Carter! He's right up there with Alexander and Tim, and Ben Templesmith! I'm crazy about his work and am looking forward to seeing more of his stuff in future issues (and back issues if I can get my paws on them). Not only did your mag inspire me to do what I do even better, but also to tackle things I'd avoid doing due to sheer laziness!

*Neville Howard, via email*

**Rob replies:** Glad we can inspire you, Neville. I'll pass your comments on to Lee – I know he'll be chuffed to have yet another fan. Which IFX artists do you like? Discuss at <http://community.imaginefx.com/forums>

## Transfer-tastic

What a great idea – I love the free T-shirt transfer. Being a fan of Kuang Hong I couldn't have asked for a better gift!

*Jacob Simpson, via email*

**Rob replies:** I'm glad you liked it, Jacob. Remember to send your photos of you wearing your new transfer to the usual address!

## You don't know Jack

For me there was only one disappointment with issue 13 and that was Brodie's Tales. This is a personal gripe, I'm sure other people find it interesting, but do we really need a story that idolises a sneering 18-year-old street thug? Someone who will "maim or worse" for his kicks, who looks up to a crime boss and wants to make a career out of violence?

If I want to read something like that, I can pick up any newspaper or turn on the news. I've only read one page of this story and already I despise the central character, not a good start.

*Gryshnak, via the ImagineFX forums*

**Rob replies:** Sorry you don't appreciate our new comic series, Gryshnak. Jack Brodie has many fans worldwide and we thought our back page was the ideal place for a prequel to his much-loved tales. Find out what happens on page 114 as the story takes a darker twist...



The writer of our star letter receives a copy of Vue 5 Express

See more at [www.e-onsoftware.co.uk](http://www.e-onsoftware.co.uk)

## Teaching Mr K

The last issue arrived but there must have been a fault on the free disc that I did not see, I put it in my drive and it smashed into hundreds of pieces and wrote my drive off – so I had to buy a new one. I'm a bit wary of using the disc now. Also I can't get on to the ImagineFX website. I keep putting in my password and it won't let me in.

I read in the letters page about Alan K's problems, he lives quite close to me and I would like to help him achieve some success in digital art, if you pass my email address to him I will teach him, Photoshop, Poser, 3ds max and other programs I know.

*Patrick Noone, via email*

**Rob replies:** Thanks for your letter Patrick. I can assure you that your disc shattering is a very very rare occurrence – we have sent you a replacement. As far as the website goes, we had a few teething problems, but all should be okay now. If you, or any other readers, have any problems send an email to [ifxfeedback@futurenet.co.uk](mailto:ifxfeedback@futurenet.co.uk) and we'll help you out. And I'm sure Alan K will be very grateful, I've passed on your email address.



Problems with the ImagineFX disc are very rare but if you experience any, don't hesitate to contact us. See page 66 for details of who to contact.

An ImagineFX and LaCie promotion

FANTASY &amp; DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

LACIE

# Don't lose your work!

Back up regularly to avoid suffering the pain of losing valuable and irreplaceable artwork

**W**e've all done it – forgotten to back up a sketch, brush, or final image and then accidentally deleted it or lost it due to computer failure. It's a fact: computers crash. And your work could be lost in the ether forever. The safest solution for any fantasy, illustration or concept art professional is a RAID (Redundant Array of Independent Disks) drive. Basically, a RAID system makes sure your work is always backed up, which means your work will always be safe.

We spoke to UK-based Concept Artist Gary Tonge about the importance



of backing up your work: "A concept piece can take up to and in excess of 20 hours to complete. It would be madness not to back up regularly. It could cost thousands to replace lost work." It's also important for an artist to have fast transfer rates at their disposal: "Image files can be over 200MB in size, so fast transfer rates really speed up workflow in a concept art environment."

## THE TOWER OF POWER

The LaCie Biggest S2S is an extraordinary combination of high capacity (up to 2.5TB – that's 2500GB!), RAID security and speed in a sleek five-drive tower. It's the ideal solution for any artist wanting to keep their valuable work secure, and looks great parked next to your Mac or PC.

It could cost thousands of pounds to replace lost artwork

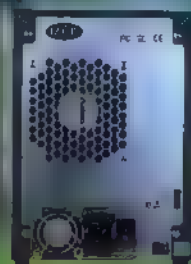
The S2S is powered by the newest industry-leading Serial ATA 3GB/s technology. Simply plug it into a SATA II 3GB/s host and you'll get a rapid sustained transfer rate of up to 187MB/s. There are five bays with hot-swappable drives, and it's compatible with Mac and PC. You'll also get the LaCie SATA II 3GB/s PCI-X Card to hook it up to your machine. It's the obvious choice for creative pros and serious artists!

The S2S is available in two different configurations. Prices start at £1,009.

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the S2S and LaCie's full range of storage devices see [www.lacie.com/uk](http://www.lacie.com/uk)

Gary Tonge's stunning concept artwork. The artist backs up frequently in order to avoid potential disaster.



# Artist Q&A

GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS? EMAIL [HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM](mailto:HELP@IMAGINEFX.COM)

## The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS!  
SEE PAGE 43 FOR DETAILS

### Kuang Hong



Based in Beijing, 26-year-old Hong works as an art director. He also freelances as an illustrator for novels.

[www.zemotion.net](http://www.zemotion.net)

### Henning Ludvigsen



Henning has 12 years illustration, design and digital art experience. He is art director for a game developer in Greece.

[www.henningludvigsen.com](http://www.henningludvigsen.com)

### Melanie Delon



Melanie is a freelance illustrator based in Paris, France. Fantasy and dreamy subjects are her favourite to paint.

[www.eskarina-circus.com](http://www.eskarina-circus.com)

### Adam Benton



A freelance illustrator with high-profile clients in advertising, publishing, science and medicine. His love is sci-fi art.

[www.kromekat.com](http://www.kromekat.com)

### Francis Teal



Francis is a freelance conceptual designer and illustrator who's worked in games, comics, TV commercials and film.

[www.teangt.com](http://www.teangt.com)

### Jonny Duddle



Jonny is a freelance illustrator and works in the entertainment industry. He is based in the UK.

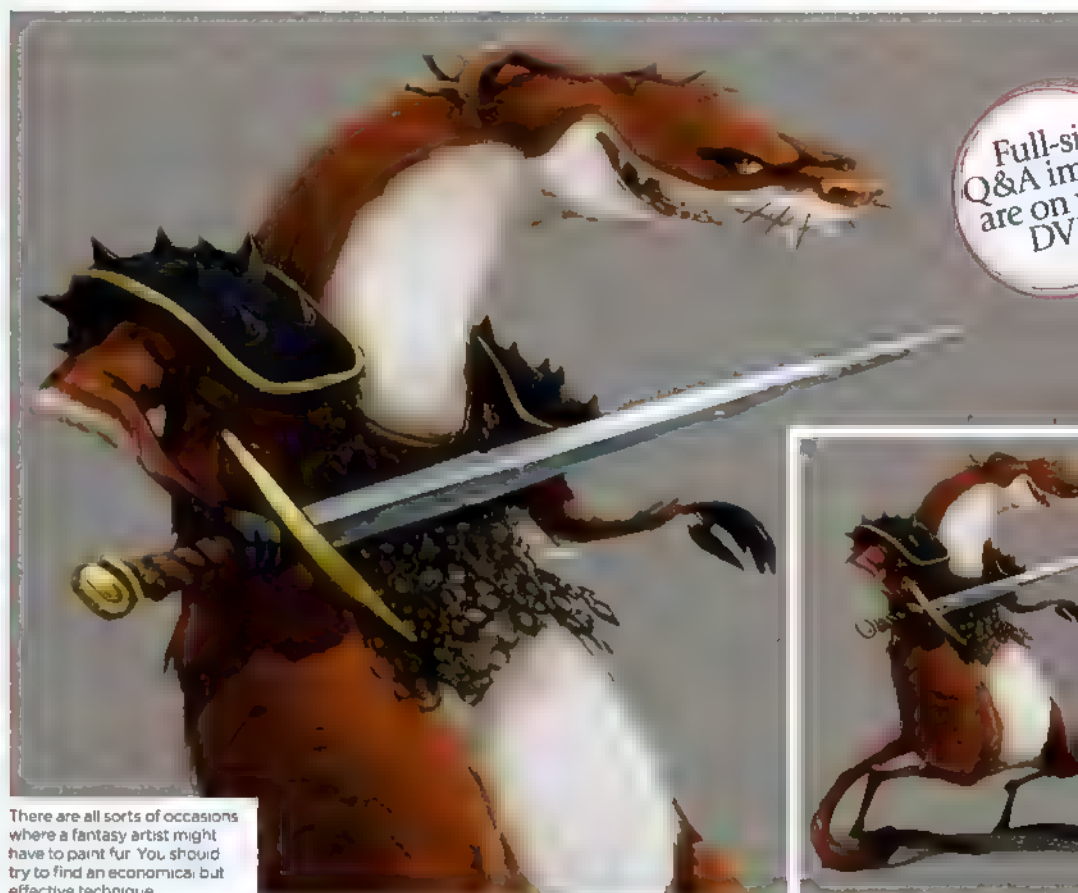
[www.duddlebug.com](http://www.duddlebug.com)

### Bobby Chiu



Bobby Chiu is an independent artist from Toronto, Canada. He is involved primarily in film and television production.

[www.imaginefxstudios.com](http://www.imaginefxstudios.com)



There are all sorts of occasions where a fantasy artist might have to paint fur. You should try to find an economical but effective technique

## Question

I find painting creatures and animal hide very time consuming; do you have any good tips for painting fur?

Jemma Bryant, Australia

## Answer

Jonny replies



Painting fur can be a painstaking process, but with a Wacom tablet and a copy of Photoshop or Painter it really doesn't need to be.

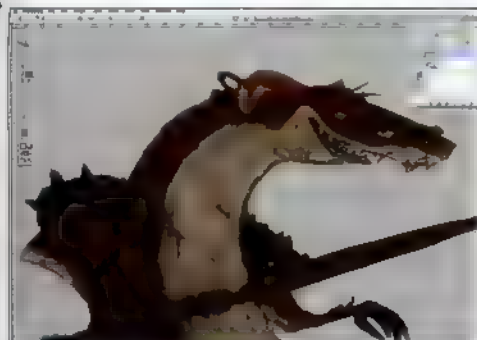
The first thing to consider is the final resolution of your painting. There isn't any point in carefully painting in individual hairs if the

image is going to be printed, or displayed on screen, at a resolution where those details will be invisible.

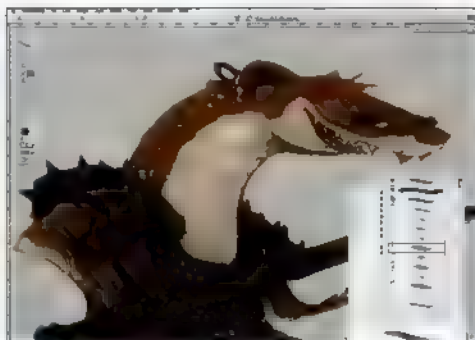
I paint most fur or hair with a similar technique. I'm a big fan of Photoshop's Brushes palette, which can make painting fur fast and fun. I start off with a dark base that will either be appropriate for my shadows or the general colour scheme of the character. On top of this I pick a

marginally lighter shade that will form the basis of the fur's colour. I paint this with Photoshop's Chaos brush with Opacity set to Pen Pressure. Then I pick a Stipple brush and paint the fur in quickly while trying to follow the contours along which the fur would grow. By building up from the dark base and gradually adding lighter tones and variations in colour, effective fur can be generated quickly.

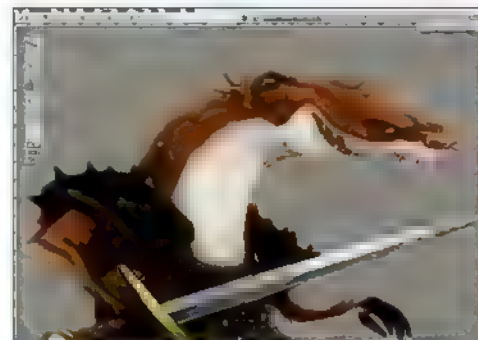
## Step-by-step: Painting the fur of a threatening stoat



**1** I paint over a dark base colour then start painting the main colour on a new layer above the line art. So I start the fur with a dark, slightly desaturated red-brown, paint with a chunky brush and make bold marks following main anatomical shapes.



**2** Once I've got the main shapes blocked in with the darker shades, I start on the fun bit – pick a Stippled brush and start quickly painting in the fur. I make a point of following the contours of the character's body and follow the fur's growth patterns.



**3** I add a separate shadow layer and paint in some provisional shadows. The shadow layer is set to V-Light, which can throw up some weird effects if I'm not careful. I continue to add lighter tones to the fur and subtle variations in colour.

### Question

How do I paint a piece of landscape that doesn't take weeks to finish but still looks pretty polished?

Katie Marr, Wales

### Answer

Hong replies



In Photoshop, make a base with a big brush to create the draft of the landscape.

background, it's important to create the atmosphere of the background as well as the composition. If you have already thought of a theme before you start working on the composition, you can draw rough guidelines as an aid. The brush choice is very important. The purpose of the draft is to know the sizes and proportions of your subjects, so

you can continue adding the details later on.

The norm of colouring is to go from the background to the foreground and from top to bottom. When subjects get too far from your peripheral vision they can be blurred, save time on these.

For the atmosphere, here's where it takes time: the edges of the landscape subjects should be painted in thin and precise strokes. The atmosphere and sunlight in the background help to build contrast in the picture.

Take note of layers in the foreground. Some important

parts (the road, drains and so on) you should try your best to make detailed. Lighting is very important too. Remember the reflective surfaces of each object – the key part. Afterwards you can adjust the colour balance in Photoshop or use the Sharpen filter. You can even add patterned textures. Practice is the key.

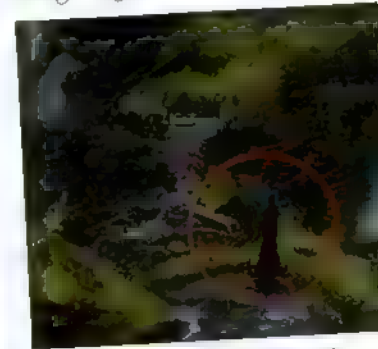


### Artist's secret

#### ADD CHARACTERS

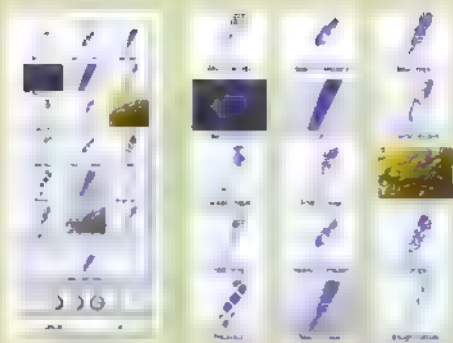
When you are painting a landscape and environmental work, it is a good idea to add a few characters to the scene. They are a good way of showing the scale of the scene and the atmosphere. You can also use them to show the lighting and the reflective surfaces of the objects. Practice is the key.

Kuang Hong, artist and illustrator



Characters help viewers to grasp the scale

Getting the lighting and reflective surfaces correct is the key to your picture



Here are the options you see when you click on the Edit Paper Settings option from the main dialog box in ArtRage

**Question**  
Do you have any tips or tricks for making a digital painting look less digital? *Jessica Johnson, England*

**Answer**  
Francis replies

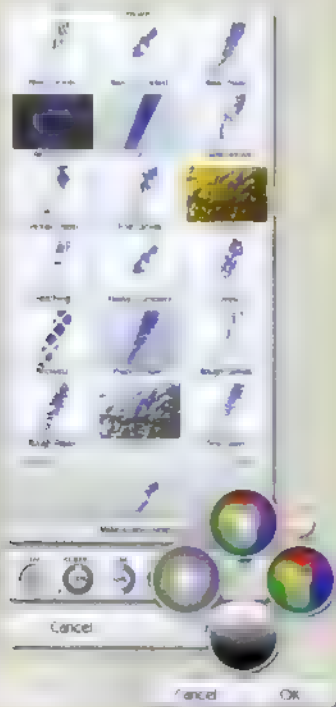


There are many things you can do to minimise the digital look in your paintings, and one of the very first options to consider is the canvas itself. Traditional analogue drawing or painting usually occurs on a surface that is irregular and imperfect to at least some degree. Usually when you create a new

canvas in a digital painting program, you are greeted with a pristine, perfect white screen.

Most painting programs have some sort of paper or canvas option, which enable you to replace that white with some noise and texture.

In this case I'll open up ArtRage, since it has a nice set of paper customisation options. One thing ArtRage is known for is its ability to emulate traditional media. This starts to get into the philosophical issue of whether it's right to imitate traditional analogue media closely. It's an interesting issue, but my feeling is that if it's built into the program why not take advantage of it? Even if a program replicates analogue media well, there's always plenty of ways to make it do things that traditional media can't do. Once you've set up a paper texture in ArtRage, you then have the options of bringing the file into Photoshop and use photo texture overlays. You can modify the analogue look in ways you couldn't do with real media.



Clicking on the Colour button brings up this set of Colour sliders. On the sliders I've set the roughness to 100 per cent and the scale to 46 per cent.

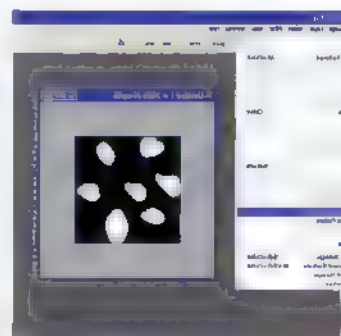
**Question**

I'm new to digital painting and was wondering if you have any advice on how to make a good custom brush? What's your favourite? *Lee Maher, England*

**Answer**  
Bobby replies

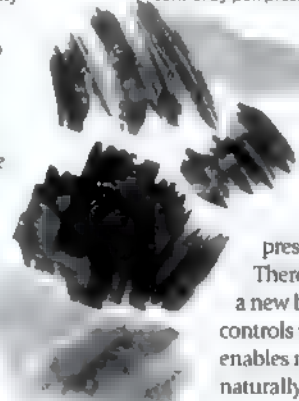


It's tough to say which brush is my absolute favourite, but my 'paintbrush brush' is definitely one of them. To make this, I open a new 100x100 pixel document, paint the whole square black and put seven or eight white dots into it. These dots represent the places where the hairs of a paintbrush might have bent away from each other, leaving a small gap in the paint. Next, I load a texture image of paint to show in my brush and save it. On my brush, I click Smoothing to On and select my paint texture in the Texture tab, setting the texture mode to Linear Burn. That's all there is to it. Don't forget to save! Also remember that



Brush Tip Shape: spacing 1 per cent. Shape Dynamics: minimum diameter 0. Other Dynamics: flow and opacity, jitter 0 per cent, control by pen pressure: flow 10 per cent.

The texture I used here can be found at [www.imaginismstudios.com/images/sketches/paint-texture.jpg](http://www.imaginismstudios.com/images/sketches/paint-texture.jpg). Feel free to right-click and save it for use in your future works because it's free.



lines drawn by real writing utensils – be they markers, pencils, brushes, fingerpaints, whatever – are all pressure controlled. Therefore, when I create a new brush, I prefer to set controls to pen pressure. This enables me to draw more naturally and freely.

**Question**

How do freelance artists make sure their work is suitable for their client's visions? *Zander Dibley, New Zealand*

**Answer**  
Henning replies



When doing digital art you might get the offer to do commissioned work. Mostly, this type of work is rather different to making a piece of your own as you will have to illustrate the visions of your client and not yourself, which naturally is a lot easier.

The last part of a project usually includes a few rounds of corrections to meet your client's requests. If the changes are not too extensive, this process can be sped up tremendously

by using a few tricks in Photoshop that consist of tweaking your piece rather than re-painting the parts that need adjustments. After all, when doing commissioned work, time can be an issue, and you might need to do a lot of changes within a short amount of time. Also, working with a pre-set fee does bring cost efficiency into the picture.

If you need to apply some minor adjustments to shapes, remove some parts of an image, or move and rotate things around, there are simple solutions for most situations.

## Question

We've been having an ongoing discussion in my art class and we can't agree; what's best, sketching with pencils or sketching digitally? *Dana Laymon, US*

## Answer

Jonny replies

The 'traditional versus digital' debate is a favourite of the online art community. But the clever artists see the benefits of both methods.

Nothing beats the affordability, simplicity and portability of pencil and paper. Many artists keep sketchbooks and doodle whenever they can, whether it's sketching the cat, drawing people on the

underground or sketching creature concepts on a tedious train journey. As someone who took an art degree when computers were prohibitively expensive and slow, I may be biased, but you can't beat the direct involvement you feel when applying pencil to paper.

But I'm a big convert to digital sketching and the wonders of the Undo and Free Transform functions. Sometimes I start with a pencil sketch, take it into Photoshop then pull it to bits and reassemble it until I'm happy. And that's a lot quicker than starting a new drawing every time you go wrong. And with a digital sketch you can quickly add colour or tone without permanently affecting your sketch. Or, with a tablet, you can sketch directly in your paint package and cut out the scanning process altogether. This takes practice, but it's a very worthwhile skill to acquire.

Sketching with a pencil? Or sketching digitally? It may not be an answer to the question, but I love them both.



Nothing feels like a real pencil. But the biggest problem with a real pencil is that there's no undo: need to change stuff, so I'm going to take this sketch into Photoshop

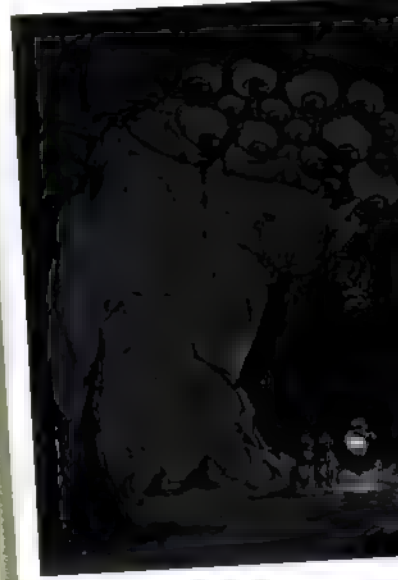


## Artist's secret

### TRANSFORM YOUR IMAGE

• Photoshop's Free Transform tool is a lifesaver. It allows you to scale, rotate, skew, and distort any layer or selection. It's perfect for creating unique perspectives and effects.

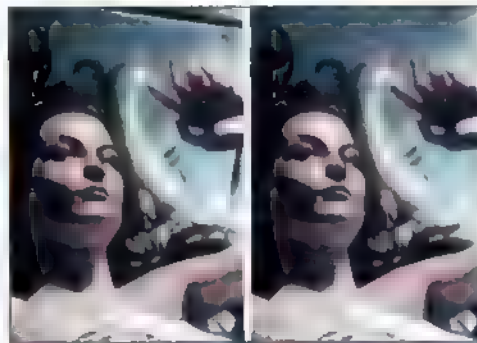
Jonny Duddle,  
freelance illustrator



## Step-by-step: Digital tweaks to meet client briefs



**1** The Liquify tool is a great tool for tweaking shapes with minimal loss of quality. If proportions are off on your character, or if something needs a slightly different shape and feel to it, then this tool is fast and efficient to use.



**2** The Clone Stamp Tool is the way to go if you have a completely flattened piece. You can copy or clone copies of a portion of an image and paint them elsewhere. Hold down Alt to pick the image data you want to transfer, release the Alt key and start cloning.



**3** Using the Lasso tool and Transform is a good way to move and rotate elements around. Still, doing this will require some amount of repainting. On this example the forearm got rotated so that the entire arm became more straight, then rotated forwards.

## Question

Can you give me an idea of how to draw some effective caricatures?

Donna Casey, England

## Answer

Bobby replies



Successful caricature artists tend to be exceptionally talented at capturing the 'essence' of their subject. How they do this, of course, is a matter of individual taste and philosophy.

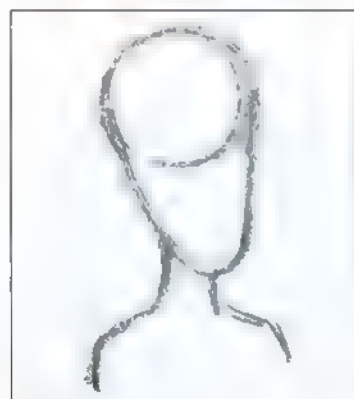
Personally, I believe that a person's essence can primarily be found in what makes them different. These could be unusual facial structures, tattoos, gestures, or even a combination of these things. Sometimes, essence is in an established pattern of expression such as a particular sneer or unusual smile. For well-known characters and celebrities, you can brainstorm a checklist of trademark characteristics that you'll want to include in your final caricature.

Because we establish our own baselines for normality simply by observing others in our daily lives, what we think is unusual might differ from person to person. However, on the whole, I think when we glance at an unusual face, we will tend to notice the same things first, regardless of our baselines for what is normal. These are the things that help to establish that person's essence. Once you know how you intend to make your caricature recognisable, you can start drawing.



A number of features make Mr Spock easy to recognise, from his eyebrows to his pointed ears to the Vulcan salute.

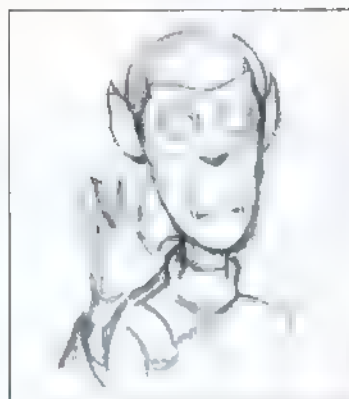
## Step-by-step: Drawing caricatures



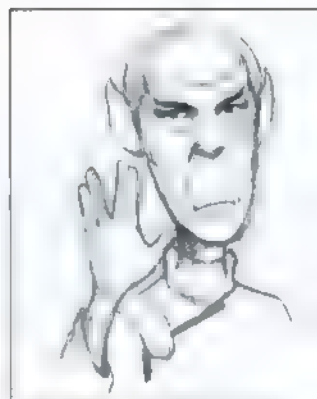
- 1 When I look at a caricature, I get my first clue as to who the person is by looking at the shape of their head. Therefore, this is where I like to start my own caricatures. I establish Spock's face with a long,ish, narrowish head.



- 2 Next I locate the eye sockets, the mouth and finally the nose. This order ensures good spacing throughout the face, particularly in caricatures where chin size and length is important. I extend the upper lip for an alien look.



- 3 Now, I begin to show Spock's 'essence' - his long face, distinctive haircut, pointed ears, Vulcan salute. I establish the face's framework by committing 'idea lines' such as his cheekbones, a harder outline of his ears, and some hair detail.



- 4 Now I expand my 'idea lines' into clearer features. I pay particular attention to Spock's serious, saturnine eyes because this is the most expressive part of his face. I detail the ears and introduce some lighting by adding shine into his hair.



Use a dark shade and a large brush to sketch the figure, and use loose strokes to give the hair bounce

**Question**  
How do I paint curly hair? I want to draw a character with a lot of tight curls. *Steve McAvoy, Scotland*

**Answer**  
Hong replies

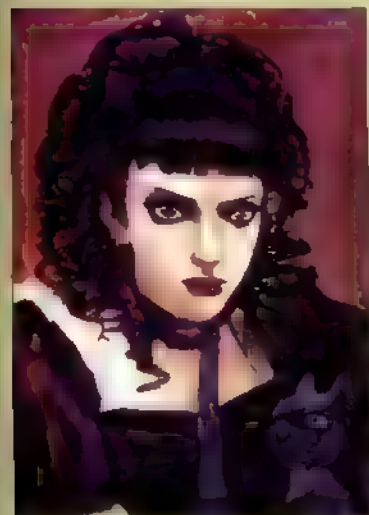


In Photoshop, lay out a rough background using large brushes. I'm just doing something simple, without much layering, so that the background doesn't snatch the attention from the character

When the background is complete, again with a large brush, use a dark shade (I use black) to sketch the figure, then lighter shades to roughly guide the separate/different parts of the figure. Due to the nature of the many layers for this hairstyle, use

some loose strokes and variations in directions to show the bounce of the hair so that it doesn't look stagnant. Look up some photographs for references, flatten the colour to duotones and study the shapes.

The base colour being black to work with my colour palette, I start laying out more dark purples throughout the hair. Think of the shapes and lightings, and apply a lighter shade that will signify the light parts of the hair. This is a very important procedure, as mentioned earlier, again, be sure to use references if you feel you need them. The key is to keep it simple – don't think about too many details at this stage, just layer the shades. Go from the darkest, through mid-tone, to light tone. Do not rush to do the lightest shades, take your time and start from the duller ones. Lastly, a few very fine strokes to highlight some streaks will give more texture, layering and variation to your hair



By taking your time with your painting, and going from the darkest, through mid-tone, to the lightest, and adding a few very fine strokes of highlight, you'll get nicely textured hair

## Question

How do I add insignia/decals to my sci-fi robot and spaceship models when using Cinema 4D? *Dave Jenkins, England*

**Answer**  
Adam replies



One way would be to paint them directly into your texture maps of course. But if you want multiple copies of that same robot to look like an army, for example, that involves a lot of extra painting and texture map versions. However with just one or two base textures (procedural or bitmap) for your model and its clones, you can just apply different decals using the following method.

Start by saving the required decal as a png with a transparent background in Photoshop. Create a new material in C4D, and import your png into the Alpha channel. Because the png was saved against a transparent background, regardless of the colour

information in the image itself, it will have a perfect Alpha cutout, leaving you free to either import the same image into the Colour channel or use the C4D Colour channel to give your decal a uniform hue. Drop this material on to your object (after the base textures) and use the usual texture mapping methods to place it where you want.



Simple Insignia was created in Photoshop, and applied to multiple robot clones as decals in C4D

## Question

Do you have any tips on how to make grass look good? It can be tedious work and I get bored quickly. *Reuben Wylie, England*

**Answer**  
Henning replies



There are many ways of creating grass. If you're in a hurry you could either create a custom-made grass brush or choose a middle-way solution.

Start off by creating a patch of grass on a separate layer. Make it big, as if it was in front of the viewer. Keep the layout of the patch wide and shallow.



You need only paint a small portion of the grass. Then just place the patches repeatedly in front of each other until it becomes lush vegetation.

Now, duplicate the grass layer, scale it down and place it at the back of the field. Repeat this process and add patches in front of each other towards the viewer. Make them bigger as you move closer. Flip some of the patches horizontally to avoid repetition. Using the Liquify tool (Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+X) is also a nice and easy way to push the grass into different shapes to give it some vital variation.



To finish, add some dirt. If you enjoy details, add some pebbles and shadows to the ground to make the visible patches of grass look good.

### Question

**Question:** However hard I try, the hands I paint always look unrealistic and lifeless. Any tips? *Stuart Gilbert, England*

### Answer

### Melanie replies



Hands are one of the most difficult parts to paint on a character. You should bear in mind that they have soft, fleshy, and also that they are a great way of conveying emotions.

When you begin a hand, you have to think about the construction lines (they all come from the wrist), don't hesitate to use your own hands as a model. In general, fingers start at half of the hand and they are more like cylinders than boxes. The light will be stronger at the joints but also redder, because the skin is thinner there. When you're satisfied with the first sketch, start shading. Try to smooth as best as you can here.

Use a basic Round Edge brush for the base and a Spackled one for the final blending. Once you've done all of this, the only thing left is the texturing. This step is the most



The colour scheme is obviously the same as for the character except for the extremities of the fingers and the joints, which are redder.

decisive one. I use a basic Round Edge with Dynamic Shape set to Pen Pressure with a hardness of 70 per cent. I add a few thin lines and folds on the skin and on another layer some light dots – don't forget the nails.



Adding all the little details, such as the veins or the skin fold between fingers, will increase the realistic look of your hand.



With the terrain object, Bryce flattened close to ground plane, and a suitable material applied, it's possible to create 3D blood spatters.

## Question

**Question**  
How might I go about creating realistic looking blood in my 3D scenes, as at the moment, I am adding it in post with Photoshop brushes, and the results are too flat? *Serge Holoduke, via email*

### Answer

### Adam Benton replies



One of the best solutions I have found for this is using 3D apps that will enable you to create a mesh/object from a greyscale bitmap image. In apps such as Bryce or Vue, we can do this effectively using the Terrain Editor. First of all you will need an image to derive the blood splatter pattern from – you can do this yourself by throwing some ink at paper, and scanning it into Photoshop, or you can use some custom brushes in Photoshop as I did here. To create a 3D terrain from this image, the blood needs to be in shades of grey up to white (highest point) with a background of solid black (lowest point). To ensure a nice subtle falloff, making the blood more blobby, you need to work with some duplicate layers of your splatter shape. The base one should be hard-edged and dark grey against black. Then

by using the same selection, feather that 20, and fill the next layer with white, reducing its Opacity to 25 per cent. Do the same with a new layer, but only feather the original selection by 10, fill with white, and set Opacity to 50 per cent. Repeat this twice more with feathered selection values of 5 and 2, and Opacity of 75 per cent and 100 per cent. Create terrain, and import your flattened image. Use some smoothing in the editor, and then squash the resulting terrain down to almost flat in your viewport. Then simply add a suitable material



To get the rounded, biobby edges of the blood, create a softened greyscale gradient layering progressively brighter and softer edged layers in Photoshop.

**Coming  
next month**

**Our artists answer  
your questions on**

Using patterns in concept art  
**How to draw dynamic figures**  
Painting fantasy animals

## Question

**What kind of digital tools do you find most useful for concept art?**

*Karl Morris, England*

## Answer

**Francis replies**



I have found that some tools are more useful than others in certain situations.

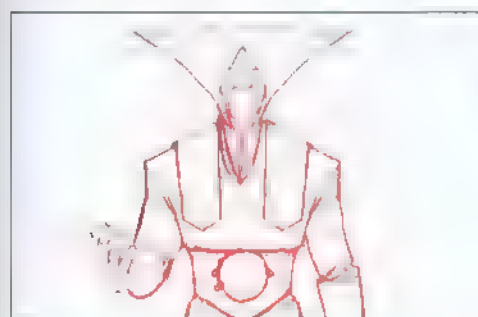
For instance, Photoshop has a pretty robust tool set for selecting, scaling, and distorting portions of your drawing. This can be pretty helpful, for example, in the early stages of laying out a character design – being able to selectively scale, rotate, or mirror things like arms, facial features, costume elements, and so on enables you to quickly set up a pose and proportions that you like. I have definitely found this to be an advantage over pencil and paper.

Photoshop gives up some advantage in terms of line quality. Photoshop line drawings often look for lack of a better term, 'digital.' There are some brush dynamics you can specify in the brush settings, but lines drawn in Photoshop will almost never have the same energetic and lively quality of a hand-drawn line drawing. I've found that the drawing tools in Painter are a pretty good compromise. In the second step below, I've used the Crow Quill Pen tool in Painter IX to create the line drawing, using the Photoshop version (in red) as an underlay. The Pen tool adds some jitter and life to the line quality.



**I have found that some digital tools are more useful than others in certain situations.**

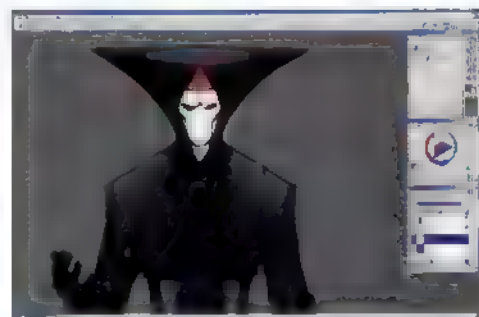
## Step-by-step Combining digital tools effectively



**1** Each program has its strengths. Photoshop is good for the basic underlay drawing, where angles and proportions can easily be adjusted. I've used Photoshop's transform tools to get the exact proportions I wanted.



**2** The figure laid out and adjusted. I bring it into Painter to take advantage of the more natural feeling drawing tools, such as the Crow Quill Pen tool. I've created a new layer on top of the red line drawing from Photoshop, which I will use as an underlay.



**3** For the colour block in, either program can be used depending on personal preference. In this instance, I'm not taking the rendering very far, so either program is fine for this step. I do want to try a bit of filter work in Photoshop just for fun.

**Got a digital art problem? Artist's angst? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at [help@imaginefx.com](mailto:help@imaginefx.com) or write to Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.**

imagine  
**MASTER  
ART**

That's gonna hurt in the morning! One of Marko's covers for the revitalized *Blade*, for Marvel Comics.

## Artist **PROFILE**

**Marko Djurdjevic**



**AGE:** 27

**COUNTRY:** Serbia  
Marko has 10 years

of experience as a freelance illustrator and concept designer. He's worked in multiple fields, including comics, video games, RPGs, and films. He loves dogs, but is not so fond of cats.

[www.sixmorevodka.com](http://www.sixmorevodka.com)



#### BLADE COVER ISSUE 1

Another of Marko's recent commissions for Marvel Comics' Blade series.

The art of

# MARKO DJURDJEVIC

"The outcome of every stroke I put down on paper will always be the same - a window into the man I am." Check out the view from Marko's window

**M**arko Djurdjevic runs on insight. He eschews life-models of any kind, his artistic method involving an attempt to directly express a creative vision culled from exhaustive observation. "To understand an artist," he says, "one has to see his body of work as a whole and concentrate on the most insignificant details."

Letting go is key: "I consider the process of creating art to be as complicated or as simple as finding a girlfriend. The more you, try the more difficult it gets."

## JUST LET GO

"When you realise that you can't force anything in this universe, when you give up and just let go, miracles happen and your future wife might just be knocking at your door," Marko adds. And it's true: he has recently returned from honeymoon.

Marko grew up in a nowhere place in the middle of Germany: "My father despotic, my mother neurotic and art being a foreign language to our household." As a youngster there were no role models to follow, only instinct. "I can't say I had any influences besides the will to create from early on."

The hardest lesson to learn was the one which life most often served up: "Heroes

are a myth." They only exist to keep you from becoming one yourself. "Once you realise this fundamental truth you automatically fall into the role of a hero, to make up for the lack of them." This realisation is evident in Marko's work, in the frequently pained expressions of his heroically posed characters.

Even so, a boy needs to dream, and idols form a focal point. "It took me my entire teenagerhood to discover that I don't need an idol above me to become one," says Marko. Once you've overcome this human insecurity, "You're free to be whoever you want. That's when you truly grow into the individual that you are: A man or a woman who will not be forgotten."

## GROWING EXPONENTIALLY

At first sight it seems that applying these insights to art is not going to be easy, but Marko, being self-taught, disagrees. "Most of the time the approach develops as you put more time into drawing and painting. It's just a routine." It's just about following your creative nose, letting your instinct lead you. "If you're ambitious enough to put the hours in to your work it really doesn't matter if you are self taught or go to art school." The crucial thing though is to



#### DAREDEVIL

Daredevil has always attracted brilliant artists and Marko's rendering continues that tradition.

# The art of MARKO DJURDJEVIC

→ realise the importance of always taking one step at a time "If you want to learn what the anatomy of a head looks like it is obsolete to draw paper cups from life"

Art is a subtle thing, and as such you can't swallow the whole thing in one go and expect to appreciate its full flavour "You learn many mini lessons and in the end combine them into one big lesson. If you get your basics right, your art starts growing exponentially"

## BIRTH OF A LABEL

Marko met Jason Manley, Andrew Jones and Coro in early 2004. The founders of ConceptArt.org were in Amsterdam for their first workshop and invited Marko to come along and pass on some knowledge "We instantly befriended" Marko recalls "I drank them under the table that first night and the idea for my label SixMoreVodka was born." The lads in turn introduced Marko to the concept of their company, Massive Black

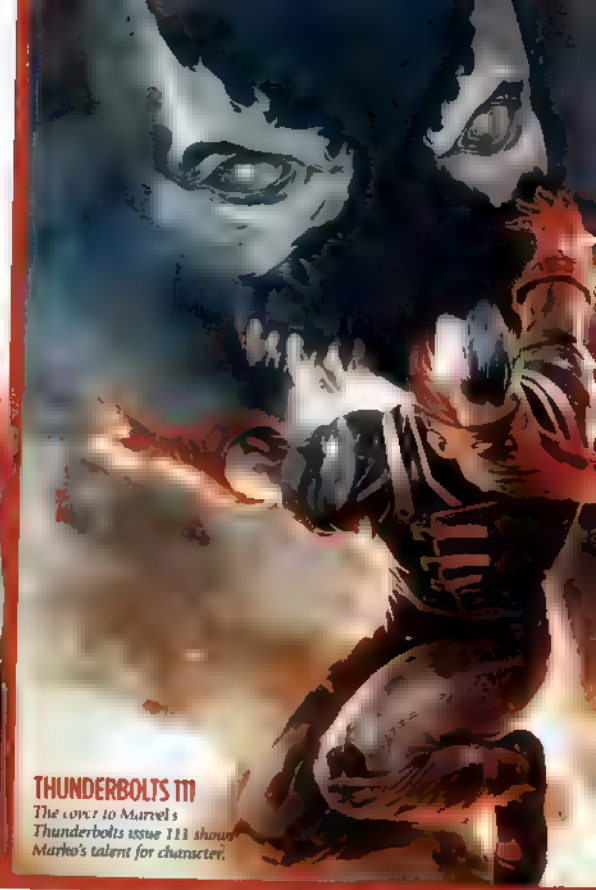
"They asked me to join them and I agreed in a heartbeat." Initially this meant working remotely as a freelancer, but as soon as the Massive Black studio opened in San Francisco Marko was asked to go full-time

## ROMAN COVER

Marko's characters often have sharp edges, making them hard to hug.



**SUPER VILLAIN TEAM-UP**  
This impressively detailed piece is for the Super Villain Team-Up series, again for Marvel.



## THUNDERBOLTS TM

The cover to Marvel's Thunderbolts issue 111 shows Marko's talent for character.

“It can often be forgotten that we as artists are more than just the art we produce. The guys at Massive Black are real people with enormous life experience to back up their art”

at HQ This sounds like the archetypal ideal working experience, and Marko's take doesn't dispel this idea

For openers, "Every experience we make is meaningless." It has no real value, "Unless it's shared with others." If those others happen to be 10 of the most talented concept artists around, the ramifications are potentially huge: "The impact we had on each other will only be seen in the years to come but I can say that enjoyed every day of the past two years I spent with them." The 'Massive Black effect' may one day appear in textbooks

## MORE THAN JUST ART

"It can often be forgotten," Marko cautions, "that we as artists are more than just the art we produce." Artists are people, with our individual stories, lives, tastes and dislikes. "Art is just a small part of us." Without this, the artist is nothing. "The guys at Massive Black were all of the above and more, real people, with an enormous amount of life experience to back up their art."

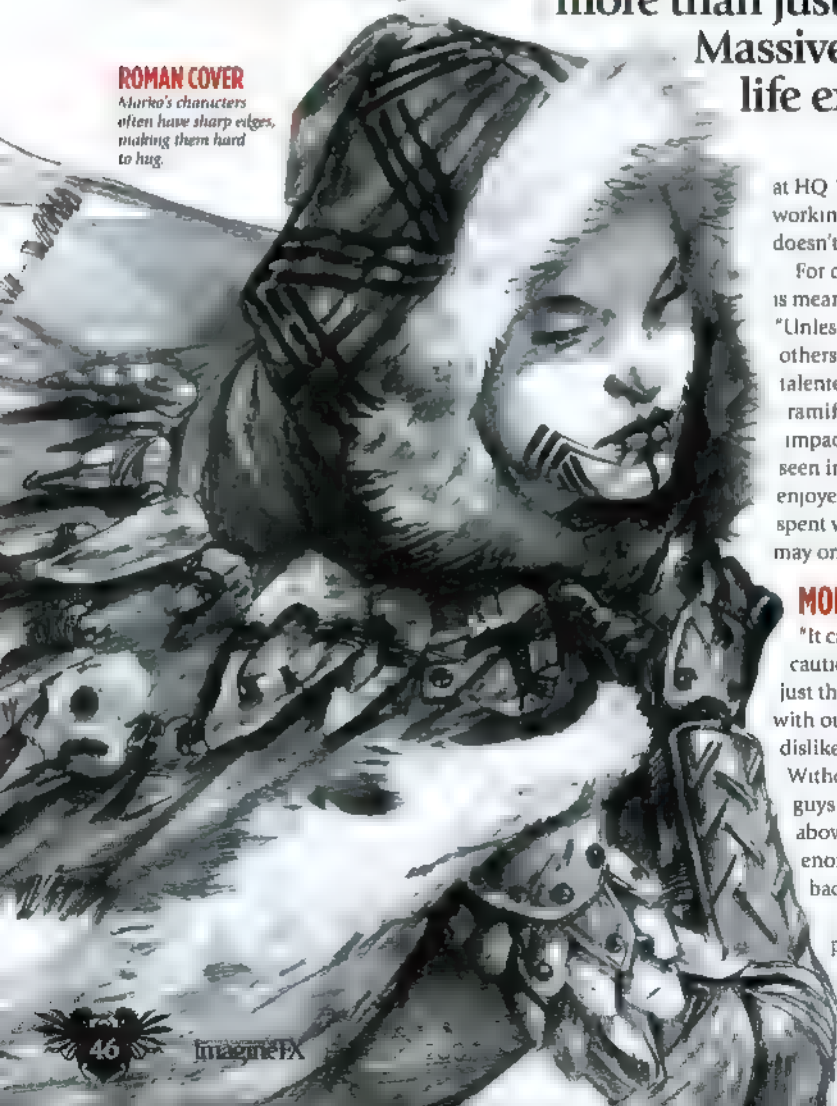
Part of that make up is cultural, part individual, and part is random

Marko hails from Serbia, a part of the world not unfamiliar with conflict, and he feels his roots very strongly: "I got the worst and the best out of my heritage I guess. Serbs are a melodramatic and pathetic people who revel in their own martyrdom." At the same time though, "They are unbelievably hospitable, loving and caring."

It's a rich heritage, one which sits on a fault line in European culture. "I think a Serbian proverb describes their mindset the best" says Marko. "Life is a pot full of shit with a glaze of honey on top. Once you lick all the honey away, you have to eat shit for the rest of your life."

## TOO BIG A SACRIFICE

Distance gives perspective and from San Fran it might be easy to diagnose the Balkan question, but Marko has left the new world and returned to the old "I had absolutely forgotten how great Europe is in comparison to the US," he replies blithely "Sure, career-wise America has a lot to offer for an artist that wants to have his breakthrough in the entertainment industry, but you have to make a lot of sacrifices for that."



ImagineFX



#### X-23 COVER

"This was the first cover I was assigned to do as a test for Marvel Comics."



#### BLADE ISSUE II

On his Concept Art page, Marko described this cover as "a shroud of funky paint."

## THE MARVEL COVERS

The promise of professional insight.

"Marvel has proven to be the most generous client I've ever worked with," says Marko. Given the sheer number of people that he has worked for over the years, this is no small compliment.

"The amount of artistic freedom they leave me in my creative approach is unlike anything I've ever seen". This is interesting because Marko isn't a natural Marvel fanboy.

"I don't have to necessarily love the subject of my work to enjoy the process of my work," he argues. "Does a car mechanic revel in motor oil spilling all over him, or the lady complaining that her SUV isn't finished yet in order to love repairing cars?"

Marko enjoys making pictures that are challenging. "I enjoy getting my stuff printed and I feel happy if my work entertains and inspires others. The subject doesn't matter as long as there exists excitement towards the artistic process of a piece."

Something else comes from this relationship: "It gives me the opportunity to change what I dislike the most and push for my personal vision of what I'd love all comics to look like." This is all to Marvel's credit; they have realised that "One of the biggest challenges of an artist is to make something that you don't like better than it was." Marko's covers speak for themselves.

**HISTORY GUY**

Marko prefers the historical richness of Europe to the modernity of the United States.

*Marko Djurdjevic*  
**DRAWING ON  
THE IMAGINATION**

"If we can have a picture in our mind of how someone is supposed to look like, why shouldn't we be able to project that image on to paper or canvas?" Utilising the power of the mind

Coming from a family that neglected art as a whole and a lack of information in school, I thought that all art was created from imagination. Mastering this approach became Marko's goal.

Fascinated by the idea that others could create realistic representations of life relying on memory alone, "I fooled myself into believing that the way to become a great artist was to observe everything and memorise it. And with this in mind Marko began developing empathy towards the people around him, 'spending countless hours on park benches watching passersby saving their every motion to my inner hard

drive.' Such close people-watching is not a quick process. 'I can't even say how many nights I spent in bars, just watching people as they move, speak, think, react. All the time building a database for myself to draw from.' Later, when Marko found out about models and props, 'almost felt disillusioned that I'd spent my whole life trying to ape something that rarely exists.'

Having come this far, 'I was too proud of what I'd achieved to give up on my approach.' To this day Marko continues to develop his memory in hopes of finding a way to create a completely realistic representation of life directly from imagination.

**SUPER VILLAIN TEAM-UP 4**

Issue 4 of *Super Villain Team-Up*, which Marko began sketching in his favourite medium: pencils.

**SPIDER-MAN**

Marko's alternative take brings a new feel to Marvel characters, even Spider-Man.

*Workshop*  
**NO FEAR  
TO CREATE**

TURN  
TO PAGE  
**68**

“Art, next to meditation, hypnosis and dreams, is the only way to tap into the unconscious. What rests within us comes to us in moments of artistic expression”

And for Marko, the sacrifices are too many: “Start with something as simple as food, it’s tasteless and unhealthy. Take entertainment, it’s cheap and pointless. Take education, it’s medieval and uninformed – based on fear of God, pseudo-democratic diatribe and TV brainwash” Europe has its problems but these have become like the lines on a characterful face

“If you jump on a train in Europe and ride for a 1,000 kilometres, you can pass dozens of different countries, cultures, languages – inhale a multicultural world,” Marko enthuses. Cities like Berlin, London and Paris are cornerstones of art and culture, they cast a long shadow across history. This gives an individual his context and something to kick against

## HYPNOSIS AND DREAMS

This question of context is important to Marko. The idea of forcing your work to have meaning is crazy, he argues, “Art, next to meditation, hypnosis and dreams, is the only way to tap into the unconscious,” he

says. “What rests within us comes to us in moments of artistic expression, not the other way around”

The artist dreams for the rest of us “If we search,” says Marko, “We find nothing.” That would be like trying to interpret a dream based on its most obvious symbols when in fact, “It’s the most insignificant detail that matters in a dream”

The same is true with art: “I can try to sit down and ponder over the artistic value of my next piece and find nothing but a desert of empty platitudes, or I can just let go and have the meaningful things crawl out of me, plant them into details that on a single glance don’t matter much, but have the most powerful of meanings when seen as a big picture in this case the body of work an artist leaves behind” In this way, an image is free to accept the interpretations of its viewers

## HARD TO HUG

“Most of my characters have some sort of spikes on them,” Marko observes. “This makes it hard for others to hug them.” Is



### BLADE ISSUE 4

Blade finds himself getting into trouble with Santa in this Christmas special.

## Marko Djurdjevic VITAL STATISTICS

**Date of birth**  
23 January 1979

**Current location**  
Berlin/Belgrade/Bucharest

**Favourite music**  
Industrial/Ethno/Classical. To name but one band, JANUS, a German two-man combo has been one of my favourites throughout the years. Their work can be found at [www.knochenhaus.de](http://www.knochenhaus.de)

**Favourite traditional artist**  
Schiele for his life, Rodin for his willingness to sacrifice everything, even his wife, for the sake of art, and Beksinski for an imagination that was lightyears ahead of his time

**Favourite digital artist**  
Jean-Sebastien Rossbach, aka Living Rope, a French designer and graphic artist whose work is a revolution to my mind. His use of form, typography and shape is a wonder to behold. His work inspires me more than any neo-realism or conceptual work ever could

**First memory**  
I remember fully detailed situations up to the second year of my life in photographic clarity. There are too many significant things to choose from



**What is the average time that you spend per image?**

Anything from 15 minutes to 16 hours, but I don't consider time to be a factor in the process of an image. Just because you put a lot of patience into rendering a piece, it doesn't necessarily enhance its impact, worth or artistic value.

**Superpower you'd most like to have?**

Empathy towards ignorance

**Does anything keep you awake at night?**  
Red Bull.

**Is the truth out there?**

We are who we are, that is the only truth there is and it rests within us.

**What is the single most important piece of professional advice that you could give?**

A man who talks a lot has a lot to confess

**Left or right-handed?**

Both.

**If you could be any kind of an animal, what would you be?**

I would be a horse, which is my birth sign. Chinese birth horoscope. Loyal, nomadic, untameable, narcissistic.

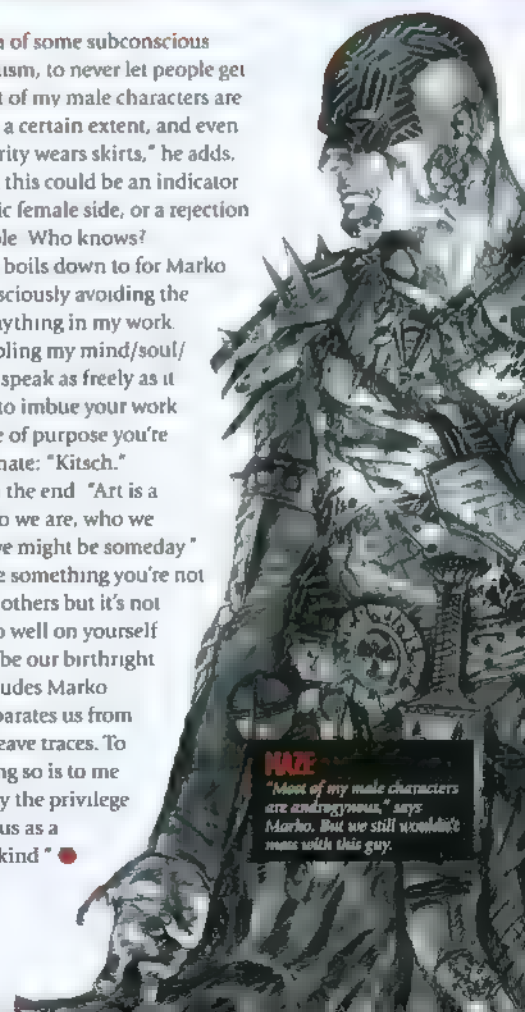
this a suggestion of some subconscious defence mechanism, to never let people get too close? “Most of my male characters are androgynous to a certain extent, and even more so, a majority wears skirts,” he adds, speculating that this could be an indicator of his empathetic female side, or a rejection of men as a whole. Who knows?

What it really boils down to for Marko is this “I’m consciously avoiding the expression of anything in my work. Instead I’m enabling my mind/soul/heart/psyche to speak as freely as it will” If you try to imbue your work with some sense of purpose you’re risking the ultimate: “Kitsch.”

For Marko, in the end “Art is a reflection of who we are, who we were and who we might be someday” Pretending to be something you’re not might convince others but it’s not going to work so well on yourself “I consider it to be our birthright to create,” concludes Marko “That’s what separates us from monkeys – we leave traces. To be afraid of doing so is to me like cutting away the privilege of what defines us as a species, as mankind”

### HAZE

“Most of my male characters are androgynous,” says Marko. But we still wouldn’t mess with this guy.



# Bob Eggleton

"Alone in the vastness, but standing on higher ground," Bob Eggleton's art reaches into the darkness and brings back something fantastical.

There's a school of fantastic art that has sunk its roots deep into the earth and come up with something a little strange. Something that has you worrying about home security, the locks on the doors and that light in the basement.

Though his subject matter ranges from pure science fiction through to horror, the thing that unifies Bob Eggleton's work is his ability to capture the sensation of wordless incomprehension – the precursor to both amazement and fear. His work has the ability to arrest the attention.

Bob learned to draw when he was about four or five: "My dad sat me down and taught me perspective,

and at 18 months – so Mum claims – I knew all my primary colours and could name them."

Some years later, this bright-eyed beginning connected with the randomising Arthur C Clarke factor: "2001: A Space Odyssey was a turning point for me at nine years of age. It was like an epiphany in fact."

## DINOSAURS

Pulling these observations together, Bob recalls his father taking him to the 1964 World's Fair in New York. "They had this Sinclair Dinosaur Exhibit. I was four at the time, but it just blew my mind." He could now put a name to it: "The fascination I

had was with anything vast, or big. Whether it was the size of Godzilla or the immensity of space."

## ALONE IN THE VASTNESS

If scale was the starting point, then an unwillingness to accept the world at face value was Bob's chosen direction to head in. "Alone in the vastness," he might be, but also, "standing on higher ground and fighting off the forces of mundanity."

These two forces led to fantasy art: "I found SF and fantasy this terrific way of expressing ideas that some might not be able to accept if presented in a straightforward manner." The kind of ideas that require dressing

## Artist PROFILE





☛ Thing is, I have this dark side, but unlike people who are scared of theirs, I kind of take mine out and have some fun with him. I look on it as paying the Devil his due ☛

up to become palatable during times of conflict: "Star Trek did that well back in the Vietnam days."

In a similar vein: "Godzilla is a warning against abuses of nuclear energy. The original Japanese film Gojira is terrific and stands as a classic to this day." Science fiction isn't just about escapism and fun though, "It's a way of looking at ideas, and the world, if you will."

#### PLAYING THE DEVIL

Bob's work isn't all allegory though, there's a note of darkness, which comes through, above and beyond the actual themes he works with. "I suppose I had a rough time on my own," says Bob. "I had a lot of anger too, due to kind of being a 'freak' in high school."

Merging these emotions with his visual flair gives Bob's work a powerful energy source. "Thing is, I have this darkside," he says, "but, unlike people

who are scared of theirs, I kind of take mine out and have some fun with him. I look on it as paying the Devil his due."

And the Devil is more than generous with the goods he supplies in return. A nine-time Hugo Award winner, Bob's work stirs the imagination without ever slipping into cliché. At least part of the reason for this is his determination always to work from the source: "Art is exploration and evolution in action."

This process has naturally taken Bob from book covers and illustration on to concept work for film. Although he's credited as a 'running extra' in the 2002 film *Godzilla vs Mechagodzilla*, he says: "My big break came when I got a call from John A Davis to work on *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*."

John wanted to work with the guys who inspired him so Bob found himself on a team that included Fred Gambino and Don Maitz. "We did a



#### TAU ZERO

The jacket for a Paul Simon collection called *To Outlive Eternity*. "This was a fun piece that I did in something like a day," says Bob. "I wanted the feel of those old 60s paperbacks."





## YEAR'S BEST SF

Bob painted this piece for a limited-edition run of *The Year's Best SF*. "I had a totally open licence here," he recalls. "They just said, 'have fun'."

ton of work and designed a film in a record amount of time. You can see me in the monster Poultra and a lot of the creature stuff."

## REFORMING

The success of Jimmy Neutron meant that when John was shaping up for *The Ant Bully* he naturally wanted to reform the old team. "The thing about working in films is that you have to leave your ego at the door. A film should never look like the work of one artist, but a kind of amalgam of all the styles of work," Bob points out.

Bob's a busy guy. There's another film project in the pipeline, book

illustrations, covers for a new set of Brian Lumley stories and the daily updated art blog. It seems that life is just too brief: "I'll never live long enough to do all my ideas." In the face of that you have to make some decisions: "I have to do what I can."

Somewhere in there you have to start thinking about your own needs.

"I want to take time out and do some paintings for me!" says Bob. "Big epic kind of things." Somehow you knew it wasn't going to involve miniatures. "I like the 'big picture,'" he laughs. "Once again it comes back to what I said about vastness. Claustrophobic is just not me."

## CAPTURING CTHULHU IN CORRECT COLOUR

Cover design for *Weird Shadows*

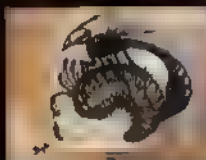
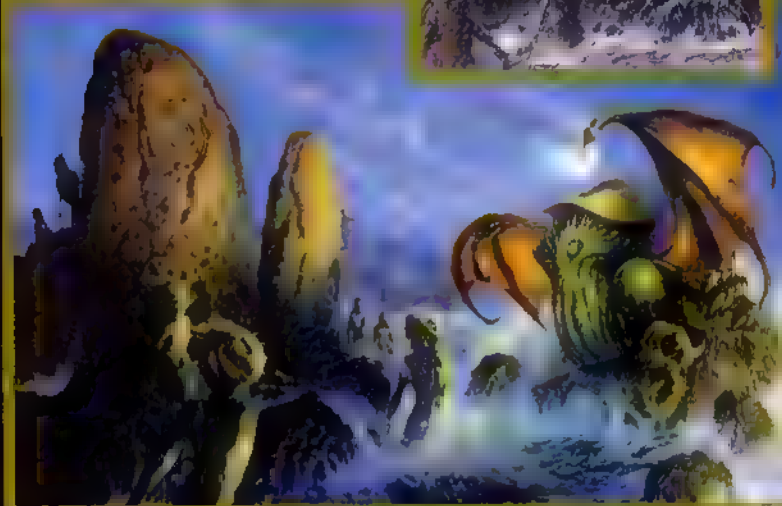
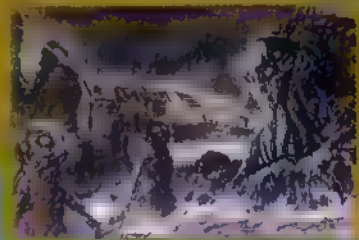
Stephen Jones, editor of *Weird Shadows*, wanted a wrap-around image for his collection of Cthulhu tales. He turned to Bob for a different take on the devil of the deep and his fishy followers, the Deep Ones.

"What I was looking for," Stephen explains, "was not only a superb painting which I knew I would get from Bob - but also a commercial image that would help sell the book." As old friends, the two had an immediate rapport and with minimum fuss Bob went away to cook something up.

Looking for a way to evoke a sense of darkness and evil, Bob wound up putting an odd carving on the rock above the scene. But when it comes to atmosphere, nothing trumps the power of a restricted palette. "I love what Bob did with the colours," agrees Stephen.

Bob, for his part, is a water baby; he's never happier than when he's painting the sea. "The blues and the greens just gave it this twilight feel, perhaps as the sun dips down on the horizon and the moon gets brighter," he says.

[www.herebedragons.co.uk/jones/](http://www.herebedragons.co.uk/jones/)



## THE ANT BULLY

Bob's work on *The Ant Bully* has transformed his muse into the world of concept art.



# SKAN SRISUWAN



## SUMMONER MASTER CARD GAME

Various instructions for the Summoner Master Card Game. When I walked through the forest, I saw a small stream. Then I plan to make them all into a single one.



# Artist portfolio SKAN SRISUWAN

Thai artist Skan loves to blend man (or woman) and machine in his intricate, metallic creations. He tells us why he loves his metal marvels

**T**he world of fantasy art has undeniably become more internationally broad thanks to the accessibility of the internet; no longer do US, UK and Japanese artists dominate the scene. Nevertheless, artists from Thailand are still something of a rarity. Although the country has a rich heritage of traditional art, it's only recently that the digital medium has begun to be embraced, with events such as the New Media Art Festival in 2005.

Skan Srisuwan is one of the best-known Thai artists, who is currently creating work as a freelance illustrator – even if you don't recognise his name, you'll recognise his style. He was our cover star for issue 5, which showcased his trademark angular, metallic lines, and he makes regular posts on CGSociety.

## MECHANICAL PASSION

"I've loved to draw ever since I was a kid, and kept training till I got to the fine art faculty at Silpakorn University," says Skan. "It was a straight line, with no hesitation about being an artist." Not surprisingly, Silpakorn itself was the first university of art in Thailand, founded in 1943 by an Italian art professor.



Skan's inspirations, however, are neither Thai nor Italian. Instead, he's fascinated with the mechanical constructions of anime and manga. "My heroes are Hideo Kojima, Yoji Shinkawa from the Metal Gear series, Kazuma Kaneko and Brom," he explains. "That's the origin of my work style. In terms of inspiration, it's everything around me that 'clicks' with me and can be applied to my mechanical style."

"Every resource I can get – fashion, architecture, concept car designs, animation, plamo, cute girls and so on –

**“The origin of my metallic style is from Gundam plamo that I've been playing with since I was a kid. I'm crazy about LEGO, too”**

I use. It depends on what clicks at the time I catch them all, then mix it up."

Plamo, or plastic modelling, has long been an interest of Skan's. In the west, plamo generally refers exclusively to fantasy and manga-related projects, although the original Japanese definition covers just about any modelling style.

"The origin of my metallic style is from Gundam plamo that I've been playing with since I was a kid," he reveals. "I'm really crazy about LEGO toys and other mechanical parts, too. When I got to university, I went wild with figures and anatomical pieces, and mixed them up for my thesis piece. For my first developments, I made mechanical anatomy, because the most beautiful dynamic function is human anatomy. So I'm working from a humanistic base, not a mechanistic one."

Even while he was at university, Skan began creating freelance illustrations for the Summoner Master card game. His unusual approach was to develop his own styles and characters, from which the publishers



**TERMINAL 7**

A CD cover for the band Terminal 7, created using Photoshop 7.

*Artist*  
**PROFILE**

**Skan Srisuwan**

**AGE:** 23  
**COUNTRY:** Thailand  
**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Hideo Kojima, Yoji Shinkawa, Kazuma Kaneko, Yukito Kishiro, Takehiko Inoue, Hirohiko Araki, Egon Schiele, Brom, Stephan Martinière, Linda Bergkvist, Capsule

**SOFTWARE USED:** Photoshop 7.0

**AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE:** 1 to 7 days

**WEB:** [www.fiduclose.com](http://www.fiduclose.com)  
[fiduclose.cgsociety.org/gallery](http://fiduclose.cgsociety.org/gallery)



## NEW FRONTIER

Skan's entry for The Journey Begins challenge on CGSociety. "I must honestly say that I've never tried such a big and complicated illustration before."



## THE CONDUCTOR

The image that made Skan an IFX

This image was created for the Master and Servant Challenge on CGSociety and also featured as our cover image for issue 5. "I finished this at the last minute before the deadline... It took two weeks non-stop to create."

Skan sees this as something of a revisit of one of his earlier images, Pepper Tundra, and it employs all his favourite themes. "My works are all based on figures, dynamic flows, and mechanical thought," he says. "I use all those inspirations, mix them up and composite them. If I'm creating a commercial piece of work, I'll almost always use photo elements as a base for the backgrounds and other effects. But for more personal works and 'fine art', my process is more like oil paint - I'll create it manually, with simple brush work."

➡ could then pick and match to certain characters. It was the opposite of the usual commissioning process. "I worked only for card games till I graduated, because card games was the only job that required this kind of illustration work," he says

### WELL OILED

For the first couple of years at uni, he worked solely with oils to train himself. By year three he'd switched to digital tools, teaching himself techniques and relying on feedback to perfect his skills. Unusually, he much prefers to use a Logitech three-button mouse pad in Photoshop to a graphics tablet. "Swinging a mouse is like an oil brush stroke using your arms, except without the wrinkling!" he explains. "For me, drawing with a tablet is like painting a two metre size canvas with a little pen."

Skan admits he is a bit of a perfectionist. "For each piece, my goal is reaching what I'd imagined for it at the time," he says. "But as time goes on, the piece is still at that point, while I'm not any more."

So he's always eager to move on to the next project. "I'm gathering inspiration all the time, and the world keeps producing more and more exciting things that can inspire me. I'm only 23 years old and I don't want to stop exploring and start producing art only for money. I wanna play more..."

That eagerness for exploring new ideas even extends to his metallic style, which he fears may "rust out soon" after being his mainstay for three years. "I think it's because I work with it continuously and it's going to become a 'pattern' eventually - that's what I'm afraid of," he says. Indeed, he's contemplating taking a short break for a while: "I must stop working and analysing my own works with my friends so I can think about new things, more exciting materials, to bring something new."

Despite Thailand's recent inroads into digital art, Skan is sceptical about its range of work ("The fact is, a pure illustrator can survive in Thailand") and almost exclusively works for overseas clients. He's also collaborated with Imaginary Friends Studios, [www.imaginaryfs.com](http://www.imaginaryfs.com), and indeed his work for their book collection, Imagine, was his first international job.

But none of these perceived disadvantages particularly worry Skan, who recognises the value of persistence. His advice for upcoming artists? "Nothing is for free and easy," he believes. "If you offer your life to your works you will be rewarded. No amount of words can help you master a skill or realise your goals, but train hard and realise them from your own experience. No one can describe what you are or what you want but yourself." ●

# Sketchbook

## Bryan "Beaux" Beus

Utah artist Bryan "Beaux" Beus reveals  
what's currently in his sketchbook

Bryan "Beaux" Beus was raised near Salt Lake City, Utah, and flirted with being a saxophonist before he started to draw. However, upon going to college at Brigham Young University he found something wasn't right about pursuing a career in music. At the age of 15 he took a break from his studies to move to Russia for a two-year service mission, teaching people about strengthening families, faith, the English language, and avoiding drugs and alcohol. When he returned to Utah, his best friend gave him a 'how to draw' book

by Quentin Blake and it was love at first sight. Bryan, now 24, has been drawing all day everyday since and can't think of anything he'd rather spend his wife doing. He now works as a freelancer doing concept design, children's books, and portraits, long-term, he hopes to also draw science fiction and fantasy book covers and figures, and landscapes for fine-art galleries.

If you know of an artist who should be featured in an ImagineFX sketchbook, email [sketchbooks@imaginefx.com](mailto:sketchbooks@imaginefx.com).

### PROFILE

#### Bryan "Beaux" Beus



US artist Bryan "Beaux" Beus started out in a different art form: at school he was

a competitive saxophonist, before discovering drawing at the age of 21. Currently he works as a freelancer in the areas of concept design, children's books and portraits.

WEB: [www.beauxpaint.com](http://www.beauxpaint.com)



W.P. 12

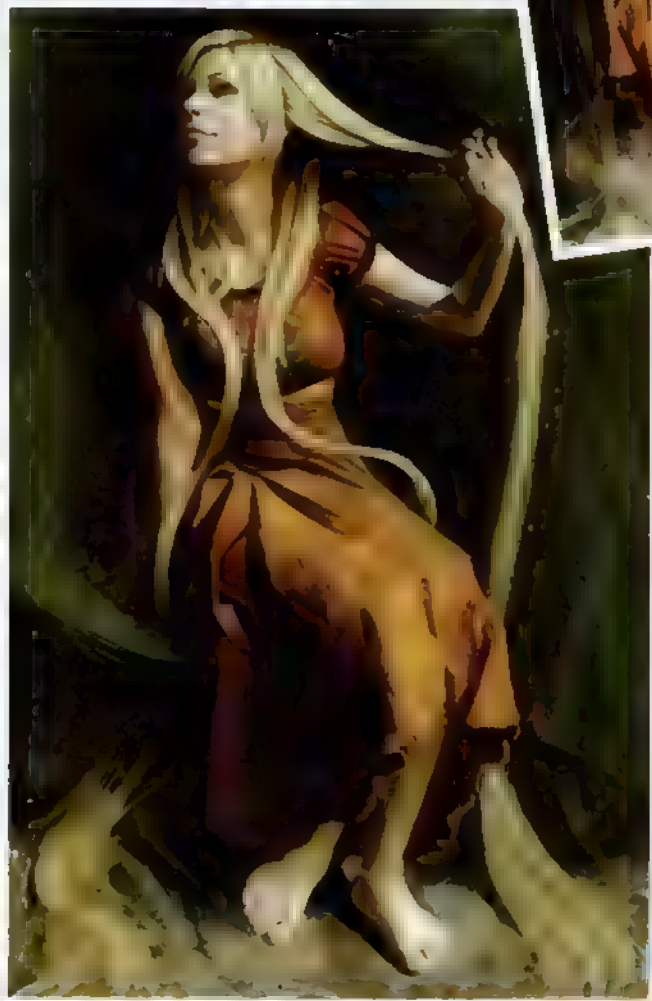
work from reference when he drew a "tender" figure. Some audience on the page that was seen. mentioned an according to the artist's own. I B. that all the beautiful, some the artist's member of the Greek for "tender beauty" seems now all the more detailed measurements I later made.



# Sketchbook

Wendy R. Lee

The background for this piece was a two-dimensional view of the character, but I wanted to create a sense of depth and movement. I used a combination of dark and light colors to create a sense of depth and movement. The character is shown in a dynamic pose, with her arms raised and her body twisted. The background is a mix of dark and light colors, creating a sense of depth and movement.



Wendy R. Lee

When I first started painting this piece, I was inspired by the character's dynamic pose and the vibrant colors of her dress. I wanted to create a sense of depth and movement, so I used a combination of dark and light colors to create a sense of depth and movement. The character is shown in a dynamic pose, with her arms raised and her body twisted. The background is a mix of dark and light colors, creating a sense of depth and movement.

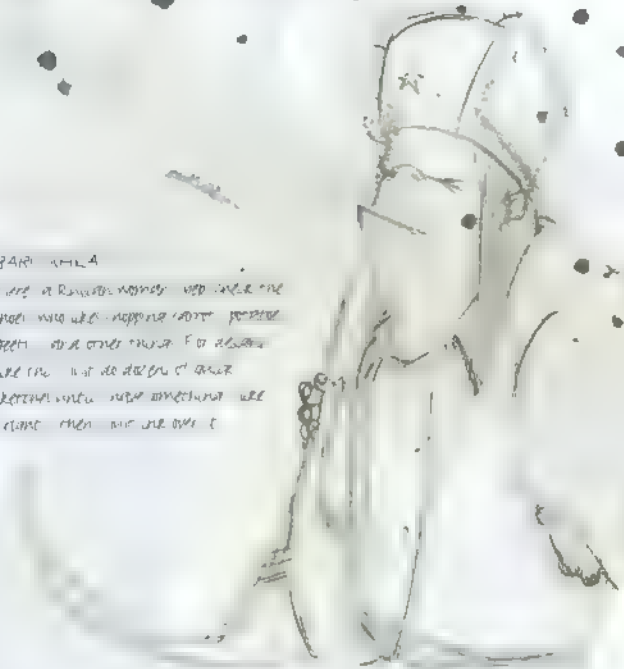


# Sketchbook Bryan "Beaux" Bens



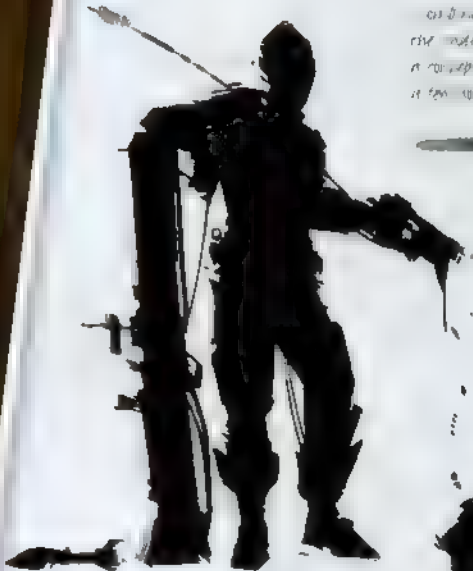
BARB KHLA

I was a Russian woman who lived in the  
 USSR who was a member of the KGB  
 and she was a very good person  
 and she was a very good person  
 and she was a very good person  
 and she was a very good person



AL AD

He is a Russian man who lived in the  
 USSR who was a member of the KGB  
 and he was a very good person  
 and he was a very good person  
 and he was a very good person  
 and he was a very good person



AL AD

He is a Russian man who lived in the  
 USSR who was a member of the KGB  
 and he was a very good person  
 and he was a very good person  
 and he was a very good person  
 and he was a very good person

# EXPosé<sup>Pro</sup>

SHOWCASING PROFESSIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

## Justin Kaufman, aka Coro

LOCATION: US

WEB: [www.coro36ink.com](http://www.coro36ink.com)

EMAIL: [coro@massiveblack.com](mailto:coro@massiveblack.com)

SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds max

JOB: Concept artist and 2D art director  
at Massive Black



"I learned to love making art running around El Paso, Texas with spray cans in the middle of the night," Coro confesses. But before long:

"I found myself spending more and more time in my black books, messing with inks, coloured pencils, and anything else I could get my hands on."

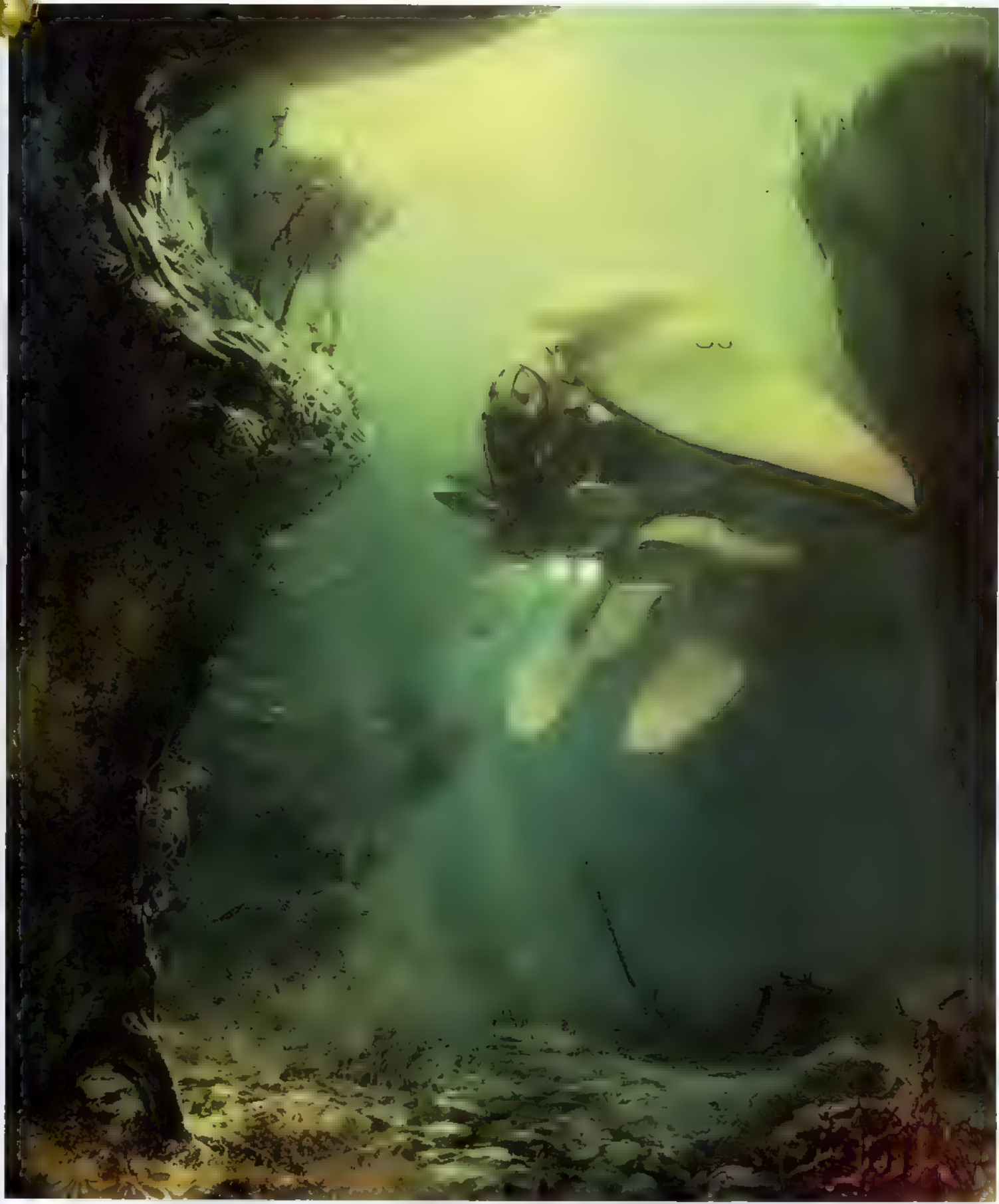
Upon leaving art school, it was straight into the games industry for Coro. "I was lucky enough to cut my teeth as a production artist at a small studio called Shaba games, drawing concepts, making 3D models, texturing, lighting, and anything else they would let me try my hand at. After four years of working there, I helped start a company called Massive Black with some fellow artists.

Living in San Francisco, with his "best half", Melissa, Coro is in an enviable position. "I feel very fortunate," he says. "To be where I am right now, working with the most talented bunch of people I have ever met, and being able to practise what I love to do. Hopefully I can continue to draw, paint, and maybe if I'm really lucky, at some point, discover the eternal truths of this art thing."

**1 BUM SERIES 1** "I've been working on a bunch of stuff for this crazy homeless bum series," explains Coro. "He's like a mystical badass dude who wears a coat of pigeons. He has an old trophy as a weapon. He likes it because it has wings."

**2 UNDERWATER SCENE** "I've painted an underwater scene in a long time, and wanted to try to make one up."







## Tyshan James Carey

**LOCATION:** Australia  
**WEB:** <http://tycarey.deviantart.com>  
**EMAIL:** [tyshan@netspace.net.au](mailto:tyshan@netspace.net.au)  
**SOFTWARE:** Painter, Photoshop, FreeHand MX, Maya  
**JOB:** Art Director at Torus Games



After six years of making computer games for GBA, PC, PS2, PSP, DS and Xbox, Ty Carey is very happy to find himself an Art Director at Torus Games, Melbourne, Australia. The previous half decade saw his former incarnation working professionally in graphic design, "A time that seems rather murky to me now," he says.

"I always preferred drawing monsters to page layout," says Ty. "So I jumped at the chance to move into the video game industry." Starting out as a humble texture artist, "I slowly worked my way to Art Director as the old ones passed away." Now at work he hogs as much of the conceptual work as he can to himself, while on the home front dodges his domestic duties in order to sketch, paint and play games.

**1** **LOVE** "I wanted to depict the epic universe of Games Workshop's Warhammer40k in a very cinematic way," explains Ty. "I also wanted to create a different ambience to the usual blast-fest you get in these images, so I chose to go for a more serene, contemplative ambience."

**2** **HUNTER** Commissioned for a Warhammer FRP book, this image shows a Witchfinder General and his toasting victim. "It started as rough digital concepts which were narrowed down, and then used to make an outline sketch on paper for the overall composition. The pencils were scanned, and then the process of building up the image began, going back and forwards from Photoshop to Painter." ●





# Photoshop NO FEAR TO CREATE

## PROFILE

**Marko Djurdjevic**  
COUNTRY: Serbia  
CLIENTS: Marvel Comics, Mass Effect, Wizards of the Coast, White Wolf, Sony Asia Games



19 years of experience as a freelance

illustrator. He has worked on a variety of projects including comic books, video games, RPGs, and more. He also has a passion for painting and drawing, and has been creating art for as long as he can remember.

**DVD Assets**  
The files you need are on the DVD.

FOLDING

Art means limitless possibilities, but to be able to create freely, we must shed our fears. **Marko Djurdjevic** shows us how.

**C**reativity is one of the things that makes us human: it's what separates us from monkeys. Too often we hinder ourselves in our creative process, because we're afraid of the outcome. But who is to judge us for what we do? The paper? The art police? Confidence in every decision is what makes art become relevant. This workshop focuses around making confidence your weapon of choice when creating art.

Rules only apply if you let them dominate your work. A free mind can

achieve anything, and whatever others may think of your work, it doesn't matter as long as you enjoy what you're doing. Don't let questions hinder your process; make them become your process.

Every line you put down on a sheet of paper is a question – "Where am I going?" If you let the answer scare you, you'll never find out. But if you enable yourself to become part of the journey, art becomes easy and fear can be forgotten. There's no right or wrong in art; you either love your trade or you don't, and denial will lead you nowhere.



## 1 Enter

I start out with a white document. Loose lines are my first choice, since they offer me the chance to pick up any direction I want to go to. I zoom out as far as possible, because I want to keep an eye on the entire image. I really try not to think at this stage, as thinking hinders the exploration of my work. Magic always seems to happen when I'm not worried, and in this case I'm completely relaxed.

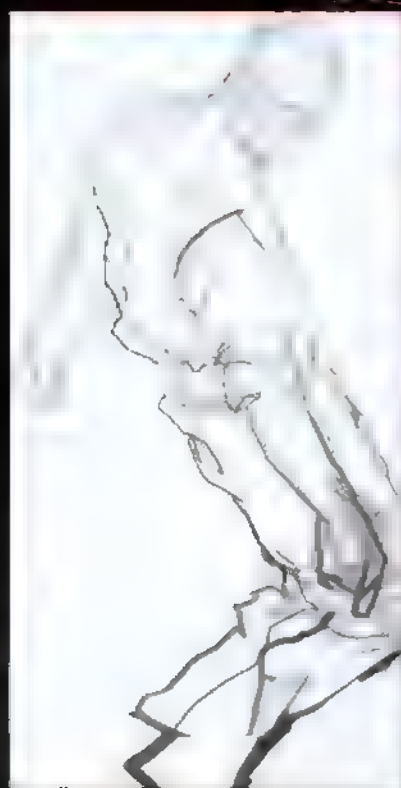
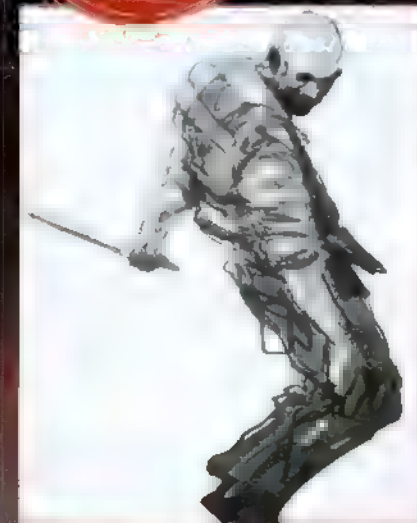
## 2 Access granted

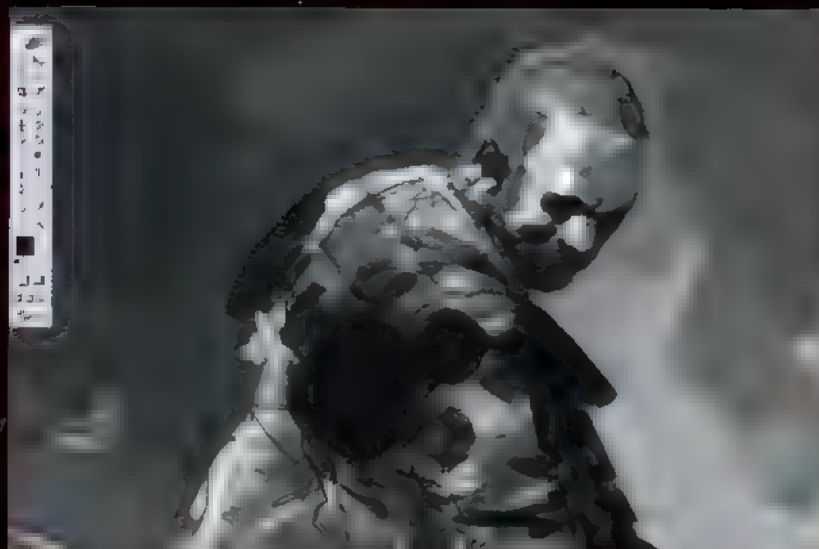
After my first lines start to roughly resemble a human figure in motion, I begin adding values in black and white to apply volume to my forms. I still have no idea where this is going, what it will resemble or if it's going to look good. What matters most is to keep my mind free for the possibilities of each randomly applied stroke, to see patterns in the painting that will help me figure out what I want to achieve with it. Every line means limitless possibilities, even if it's apparently a wrong line. I work with a default Charcoal brush set to a 100 percent Opacity, with Pen Pressure applied

## 3 Fear is a lousy friend

I'm making some stronger decisions as I come along. I add a diagonal shape to the bottom of the character to complement the diagonal of the back arm. I'm also washing the white background with a mid-tone, to make the highlights on the figure stand out more. I'm not afraid of screwing

up, so I paint on one layer only, throughout the entire image. I approach each digital painting as I would approach a real-life canvas. I never use undo – if something goes entirely wrong, I prefer to fix it by painting on top of it. I consider the lessons learned by doing so to be much more valuable than just going back a few steps with a shortcut. After all, real life doesn't have an undo function.





**1 Multiply**  
I copy my layer and set it to multiply to achieve stronger darks, and give the entire piece more contrast. Afterwards, I flatten the layers. But I will need a focal point to keep myself interested. I decide to flesh out the face a bit more, to add expression to this otherwise rough sketch.

**2 Instinct**  
I'm far enough into the piece to start adding colour and spice it up a bit. I put a colour layer on top of my black and white image and apply a quick wash of browns, blues and reds. The palette is rather intuitive at this point; I just try to have a nice contrast between cools and warms, to make the forms read better. I flatten the layers again.

**3 Are you talking to me?**  
I quickmask the figure, desaturate the background a little and use the Hue slider to push towards a deeper red. I grab a Texture brush to paint some more interesting clouds for the background. I use the Dodge tool to enhance the highlights on the character's armour.



and then go back into his face to render the expression more. This will be the key to my image, so I want to put some extra love into it.

**4 All that glitters...**  
I realise that the armour sucks. So what? I just paint over it. To always stick to one idea is like driving a truck against a wall. If you can make a decision during your process that makes your painting look better in your eyes, but it means destroying what you've already created, then by all means do so, no matter how attached you are to a detail in the first piece. Attaching yourself to a piece of art or a single detail breeds stagnation. A



## PRO SECRETS

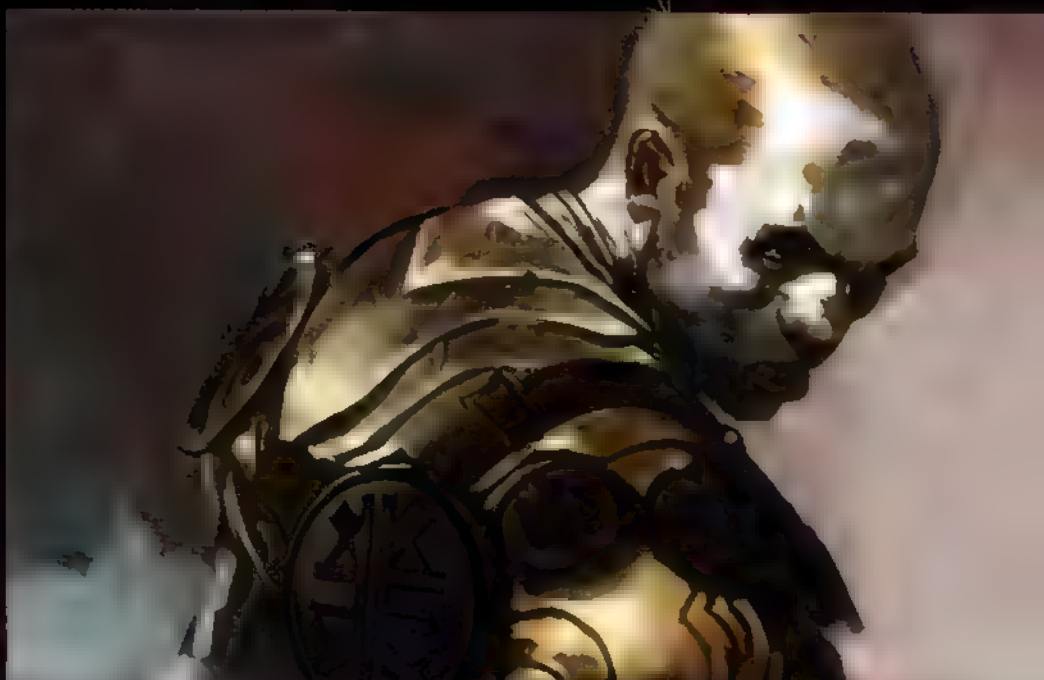
### Kick under

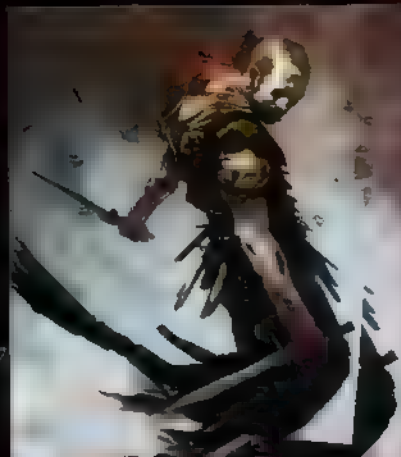
Chris/Cosmo's 2nd piece was a character study. He was looking for a way to express his feelings about the character. He was looking for a way to express his feelings about the character. He was looking for a way to express his feelings about the character.

good artist must always be able to destroy his own creation and use it as a foundation for something entirely new.

**5 Consideration**  
Now that I have my expression for the character down and the mood captured to a certain extent, I want to flesh out some other areas. I focus on the arms, define the sword at the back a little more and keep working on the armour.

**6 Characterisation**  
I put more definition into the armour plates and add a dash of red as a colour variation to the background. I add scratches to the armour to give the character more story. What is this guy about? Why is he so angry? A lot of questions shoot through my mind and help me define the characteristics more.





## 10 Embrace change

The character now carries a secondary sword in his other hand and I apply another red splash with a Texture brush to the background. I use the Dodge tool to make it juicy and pop. But I'm running out of space here, so I copy my image on to a new layer, flip it around, then scale it until I have new room to enlarge the entire composition. Again, change is a constant factor in my work and I embrace that feeling.

## 11 Pseudo-dynamics

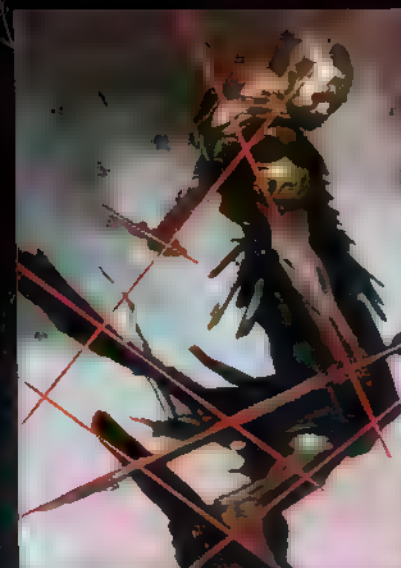
Looking at the piece compositionally we have multiple (almost) parallel diagonals that are intersecting each other now. This helps the picture achieve dynamism without actually being a dynamic representation. The intersecting diagonals also add depth because they show what is in front and what is at the back. These diagonals are achieved if you apply tension to your



figurative work. I enjoy having my characters suffer from gravitation, carrying heavy objects or just being bent by the burdens of life to introduce these dynamic diagonals into my art.

## 12 Eagle eye

I zoom out again to double-check whether everything within my painting reads from afar. This is essential to every piece and the best way to figure out if an image needs visual punch in some overlooked areas.



## 13 No rules

I move back into the painting again, defining the arm in the front more and putting some attention into the sword. Overall, I want to give my character a supernatural sort of feel, so I keep my skin tones pale and dominated by neutrals. The red variations towards the hands work as a temperature shift to make the arm as a whole visually more appealing. Next, I throw a light purple overlay layer on top of my painting to put more colour variation into the lit areas, then I flatten the image. This entire process continues to be intuitive. I'm following no plan or set of rules. I'm just applying what I like and taking away what I dislike, so the rendering never becomes boring. This mindset keeps me fresh throughout the entire image-creation process and I don't fall prey to getting lost in my details.

## 14 One brush

The next thing I do is add some veins to increase the surface texture of the arm, since it's one of the more important compositional elements of the painting. I try to emulate all kinds of surfaces and textures by just using one brush (default Charcoal). I always enjoy a challenge in art and I try to avoid using shortcuts as much as possible. I firmly believe that great art doesn't depend on the medium used, or the perfect brush for every situation, but on the will to create believable images. I know people who can make great art with a pen on toilet paper – all that matters is how willing you are to make it look right.



## 15 Abstraction

To force more drama into this piece, I add flying pieces of pattern and cloth. These random shapes generate mood and bring a new dimension to the piece. There now seems to be atmosphere and wind; the character exists within a living environment, even though we only see an empty sky in the background – the visual elements that we're being presented with make our subconscious minds fill in the blanks. These abstract shapes aren't clearly defined and so they're great for leaving room for imagination. On top of that, they're close to the borders of the image,



## PRO SECRETS

### Keeping a fresh eye

Always sleep one night over a finished piece and take a fresh look at it in the morning. You'll always find multiple little flaws that you can get rid of immediately by just taking the time to retouch yourself. Your work and see it with a fresh perspective.

giving us the feeling that more is happening outside of the frame. I also add a wristband to the character's forearm, a small element that will make the area differ from the rest of the arm.

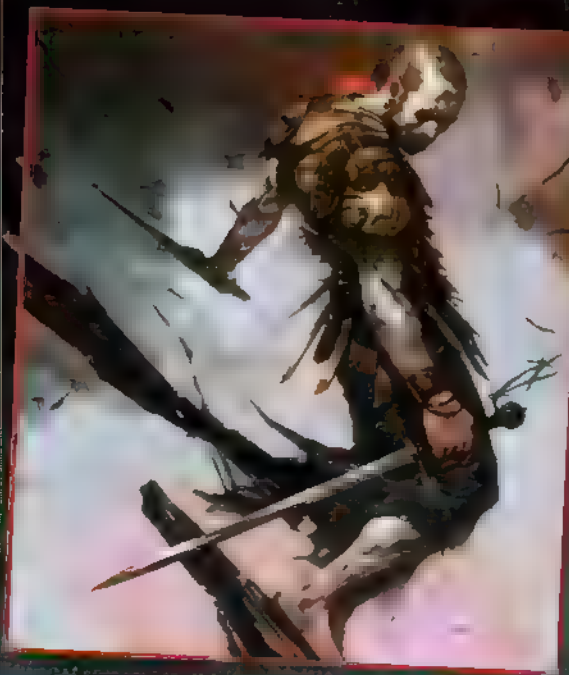
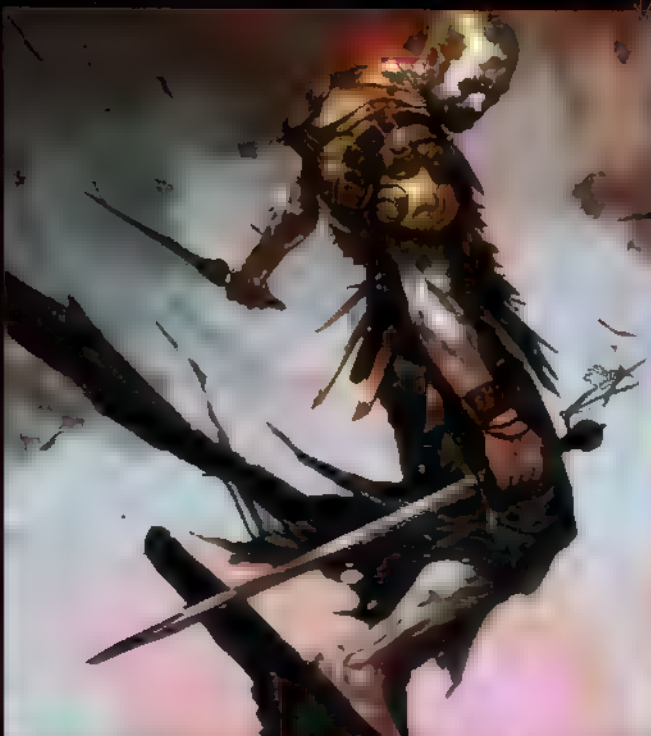
## 16 Last minute realisations

I suddenly realise that I've made a logical mistake throughout the entire painting. The neck armour simply doesn't work, since he wouldn't be able to lift his head. I will have to correct this soon, before I forget about it. I've blocked the entire figure in and now I'm checking on areas that still need work. The left arm and sword are considerably undefined and I'm not happy with the position of the arm. The hand looks like a stump since we see it from the underside and there are no fingers to define the form; I'll change that too. I throw a colour layer on top of my

painting and make a quick red wash over the front arm to give it more life. I start pushing volume into the character's skin – the painting is now dominated by the three primaries, red, yellow and blue.

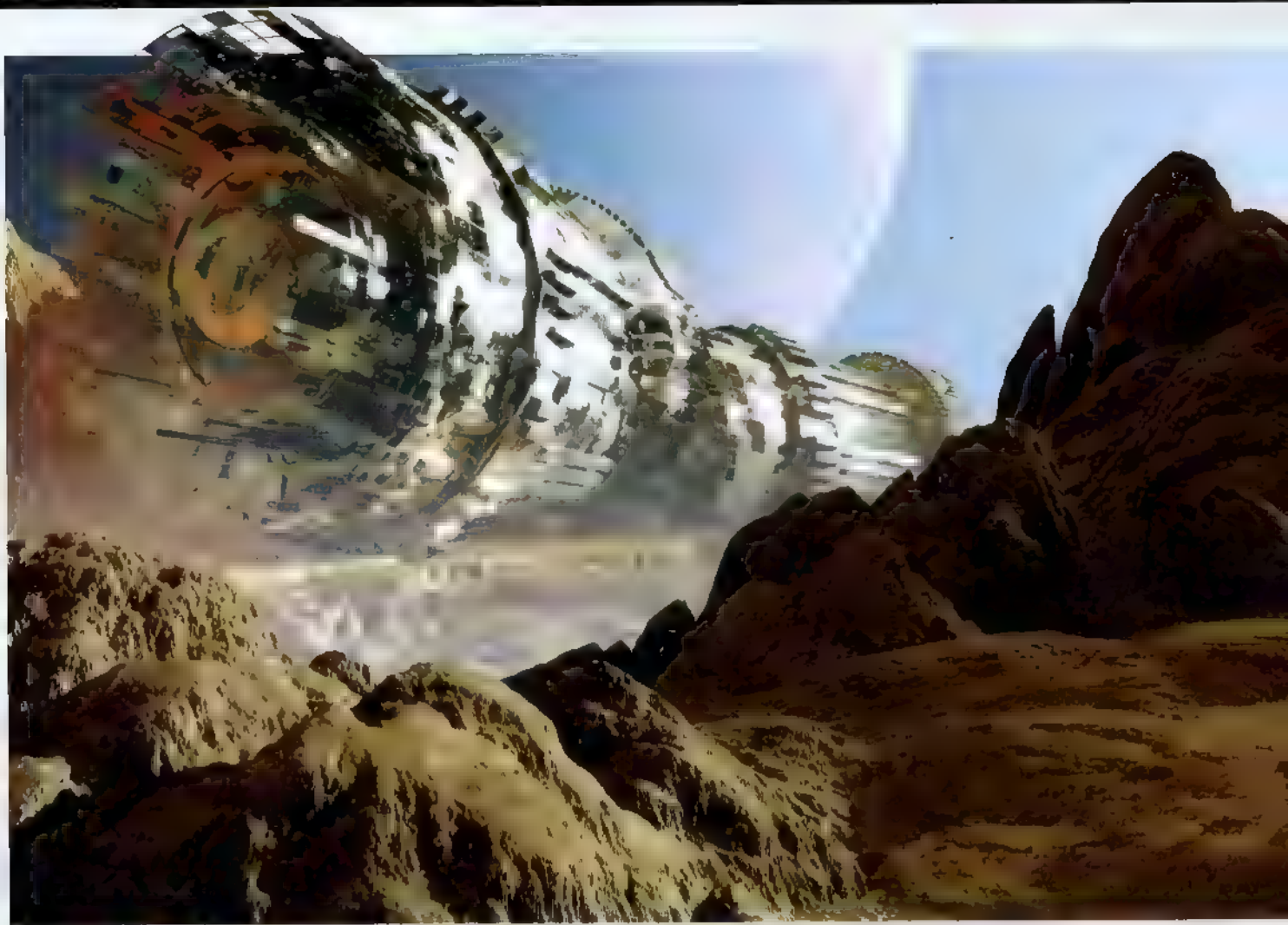
## 17 Final touches

I apply final touches here and there across my image. These steps are almost invisible but require the utmost care. I zoom into a detail of choice and start pushing volumes and values around, adding areas of reflected light. I focus on making temperature relationships between cool to warm, instead of pushing too far into the contrast between dark and light areas. At this point I have the feeling that I could take this image even further by just picking detail after detail and rendering it until it reaches a more realistic state.



## 18 Endgame

The finished work. I change the neck armour into a more functional piece. I also flip the arm at the back so we can see the fingers grappling the sword. I pour some more love into the shadow areas, using reflecting light to flesh out volume. I try to find the right balance between finished and unfinished areas, but I know when to stop.



## PROFILE

Adam Benton  
columnist



DVD REVIEW

## *Bryce & Photoshop*

# CREATE A SCI-FI LANDSCAPE

**Adam Benton** makes use of Bryce and Photoshop to create a sci-fi landscape scene including a derelict spacecraft

**B**ack in the late 1970s when I was a young lad, I was hungry for science fiction of any kind, and the discovery of a book called *Spacewreck - Ghost Ships and Derelicts in Space* opened my eyes to a whole new world of sci-fi art, by the likes of Chris Foss and Peter Elson. As the name suggests, it depicted all manner of abandoned, derelict and

ancient spacecraft in space, or on various kinds of alien planetary landscapes. Those images had a profound effect on my own creative visions, and in recent years the versatility I found in the digital toolset have enabled me to realise some images in that vein myself, including the one on these pages - *The Last Ark*.

In this workshop, I'll test drive Bryce 6 (although the main features used are

available in Bryce 5 also), and show how I created this scene using it, some Photoshop layer and Alpha channel compositing, and a small amount of Cinema 4D to create and export the wrecked ship model. Although I will be principally using Bryce, this workshop is also about realising a final 2D sci-fi image using a combination of both 3D and 2D tools.



# In depth Create a sci-fi landscape

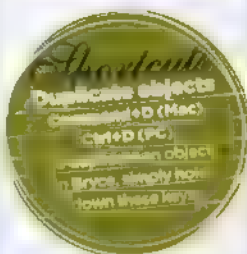
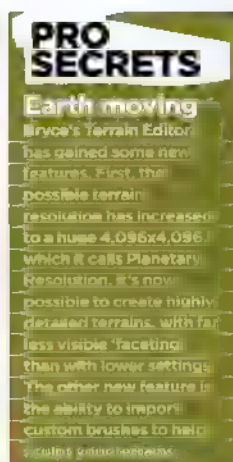


## 1 It all begins with a sphere...

Using nearby planets and moons in the sky of the world that you're creating really helps to define that world as alien, since it's outside the scope of our own Earth-bound experience. And since these elements are to be the most distant in my composition, it makes sense to start by creating these for my environment first. In Bryce, I select a Sphere object from the 'Create' palette, and use the navigation controls on the left to move in closer

## 2 Planet materials

I click on the little M icon beside the active Sphere object to enter the Materials Lab. I then click in the first 'dimple' next to Diffuse. This activates the first Texture channel (A). Now, I click on the little P button to switch from a procedural material, to a bitmap picture. I click on Load to browse my texture library, and for this planet, I simply use one of NASA's maps of Mars. I also load in a Bump map of the same texture into the second box. Clicking on the little tick confirms my selections, and back in the Editor viewport, a quick render shows the results of the loaded textures



## 3 Fading out

For the planet to look like it's outside of the atmosphere in the scene, there are some further tweaks to make back in the Materials Lab. From the Material Options drop-down menu, I select Additive. This performs a similar function to the Screen layer option in Photoshop. To finally make the illusion complete, the Sun Shadows needs to be set to a full 100 per cent in the Sky Lab - using anything less will make the planet too translucent. If you adjust things at this stage, bear in mind that if you change the sky preset, the Sun Shadow option will probably need to be reset to 100 per cent again.

I then save this document, and create a new one for the terrains.



## 4 Terrain building

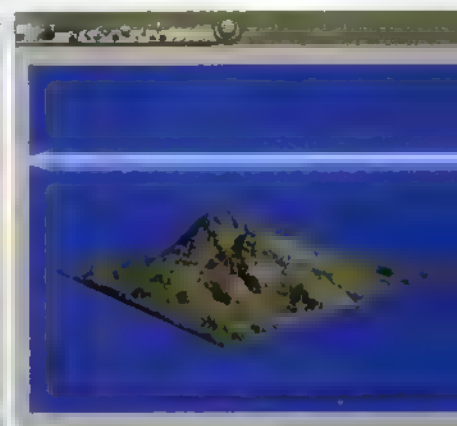
I want a highly detailed, rocky/sandy foreground terrain, so first I select a Terrain Object from the Create palette. Clicking on the [E] next to the object opens the Terrain Editor window, and from here I clear the default information by selecting New. Since I want these as highly detailed terrains, I click on the Resolution drop-down and switch to 2,048x2,048. For these terrains I started



with the Rolling Hills fractal, and then applied some Mounds, a little Erosion and some further subtle applications of Mounds, and finally some Gaussian Edges to create a more central mound area, with a taper to the edges.

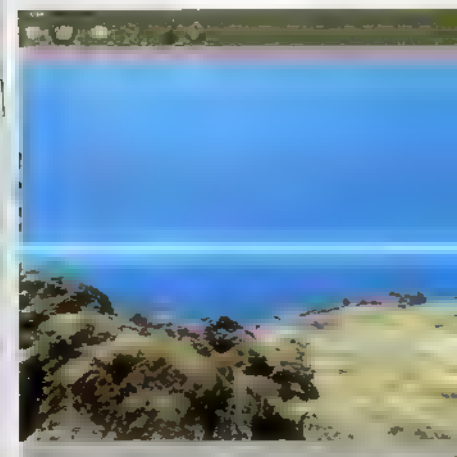
## 5 True grit

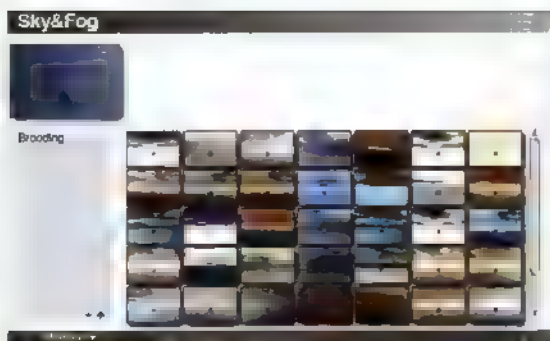
Back in the main window, I enter the Materials Lab (M), and locate a suitable sand photo texture from my library. A quick render now reveals the high detail in the terrain object, which is made even more gritty by my sand texture used in both the Diffuse and Bump channels.



## 6 Land forming

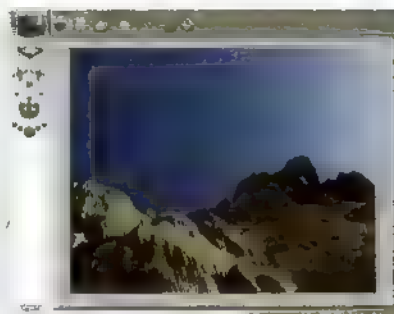
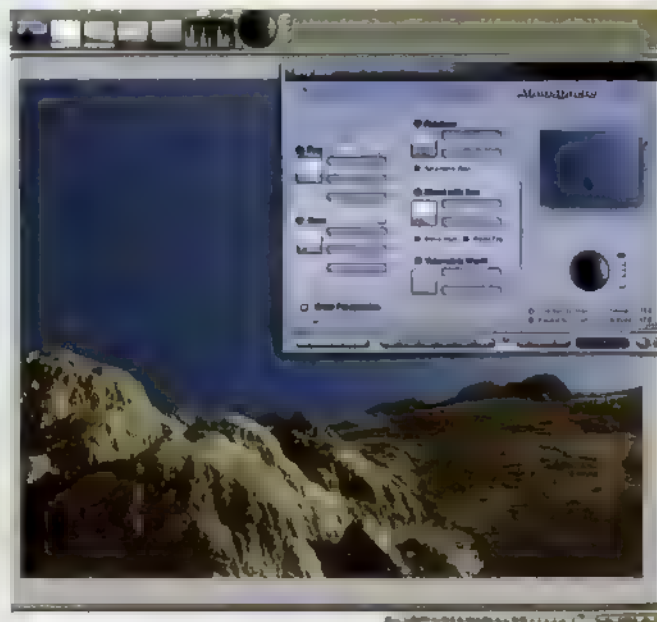
This terrain will now be the basis for most of the others in the scene. I start by bringing the first terrain close to the camera, on the left side. I quickly duplicate the terrain, and I move it further into the scene and to the right to form part of the mid-ground. Then I make another duplication, and scale down in the Y axis using the Scale tool (from the Edit palette). This flattened terrain creates a suitable plateau.



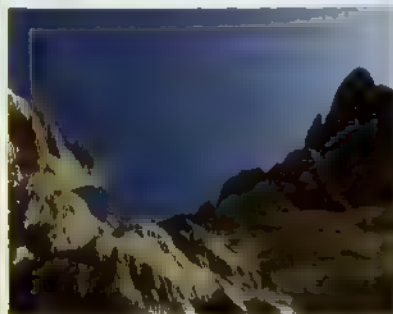


**7 Sky and atmosphere**  
I need to set the scene a little better and get the right atmosphere before I continue, as at the moment, the lighting and sky colour are looking too Earth-like. I select the Sky & Fog palette, and click on the little side arrow next to the title, which brings up the Sky & Fog preset libraries. Bryce 6 has certainly grown in this area, with some particularly well-crafted examples in the Brinnen library. I select one of these as a starting point, and return to the main window for a quick test render.

**8 Tweak the sun**  
This is looking promising already, but I need to remove all of the Atmosphere effects (Fog/Haze) in the scene since, in this instance, I'm going to add these in post for more control. With some tweaks to the sun position, and remembering to make the Sun Shadows 100 per cent again, I have a nice strong light that I like, and a suitable, simple background sky.



**9 Land forming**  
I create another duplicate of my terrain object and rotate it to create some variation using the Rotate tool in the Edit palette. I also scale this terrain globally by clicking and dragging on the Scale tool, followed by some further scaling in the Y axis, by only clicking and dragging on that control handle. This terrain now looks a lot rockier, and it also has higher peaks, despite having exactly the same greyscale information as its former versions. I place this terrain behind the others in the mid-ground.



**10 Making mountains**  
I create a couple more duplicates, and move these even further into the scene, along with some further vertical (Y) scaling to make even more mountainous terrains. Often, I go back into the Terrain Editor, and reduce the resolution of more distant terrains, since it isn't usually needed, and can speed up the scene interactions, but the rocky effects are looking so nice, I decide to keep them at the same high poly settings as the foreground ones.

**11 Plains and valleys**  
I am going to place my wrecked ship in the central area, as if we are looking down from quite high at a plain, with valleys and canyons. This should help to create a sense of grand scale, as well as giving me something relatively even to place the ship on. Duplicate one of the existing terrains, and in the Terrain

Editor (E), clear what's there by selecting New. I start this one off with some of the fractal preset Cauliflower Hills, and then apply various amounts of Erosion, Subplateaus and some adjustment of the Raise/Lower function to squash the details into a more level surface. Then, using the brush, set to a dark grey/black, I create some canyon gouges, before finally using some further applications of the previous settings to blend the canyons into the terrain. I keep a check on the progress in the 3D Preview window. Back in the main window, the terrain is positioned and scaled to fill the space between the near terrains and the furthest mountain on the left.



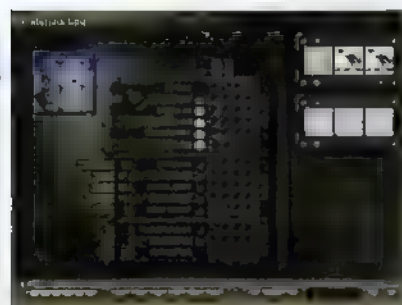
**12 Ship wrecking**  
For my wrecked ship, I briefly switch back to my main modelling application, Cinema 4D, where I have some previously created elements used in another project. With some quick duplications of the main parts, rescaled and moved around, I quickly have an object that should work well. The cylinders already have areas of deleted polygons, which will enhance the 'wrecked' look, and I modify the bottom area further by using the Brush tool to deform and disrupt the clean lines of the mesh, making it look somewhat buckled from a crashed landing. This really isn't a complicated model, since it's just made from multiple cylinders with some polygons deleted, extruded and bevelled. You can find this model on your DVD.



# In depth Create a sci-fi landscape

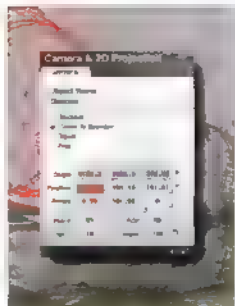
## 13 Import duties

From Cinema 4D, I export the ship as a Wavefront Object (.obj) file, and then I import it into Bryce. Before I begin to scale and position the object, I enter the Materials Lab (M) to edit the textures. I'm using a combination of two different materials – the first is an old third-party preset I downloaded from the web, which is perfect for this wrecked look, as it uses a transparency map to delete areas of panelling. To augment this further, and add even more detail to the surface panelling, as befitting an object of this scale, I add a bitmap texture from my library. I have set the mapping of the first material to Object Cubic, and the second to Parametric. Both materials can also be scaled independently, giving you a lot of control over them.



## 14 Wrecked

After scaling the ship to a suitable size, and positioning it at the far side of the canyon terrain, I rotate the cylinder until more of the distorted mesh elements are visible. Then, I duplicate the object, and place it further along the object's Z axis, to create the impression of a second, broken section. Some final tweaks to the second section's rotation complete the effect. The scene is now looking good, but it needs some atmospherics adding to create the all-important depth, as well as the planets I created earlier to complete the alien look. I also add a couple of omni-lights with their colour set to the ground's sandy



hue, and place them low and in front of the cylinder's open end, to help pick out some of the details that would otherwise be lost in shadow. This also helps to emulate the bounced light from the sunlit ground.

## 15 Field of view

At this stage, I could use the Merge... option in the File menu to load the planet document into this one, but experience has taught me that since I am using a wide (90 degree) field of view in this scene (double-click on the camera trackball for settings), even if I push the planets far away, at the scale I want them they will gain some camera distortion and become elliptical. So, since I'm going to add the atmosphere effects in post anyway, I will simply render the planets with a longer lens/narrower field of view (50 degree), and composite them later.

## 16 Rendering passes

Bryce has a number of very useful rendering options, including Distance Mask and Object Mask, and it's with these that I'll be able to separate elements, and add the depth haze to the final composition. I start by creating a high-res render of the full scene, and then, select the Distance Mask option and do another high-res render. Finally, to create a useable Alpha to separate the foreground from the distant plane, mountain and ship, I select only those foreground objects, and select Object Mask, and another render is made and saved. I also load the original planet document, alter the sky and sun position to match the main scene, and create another high-res render of that.

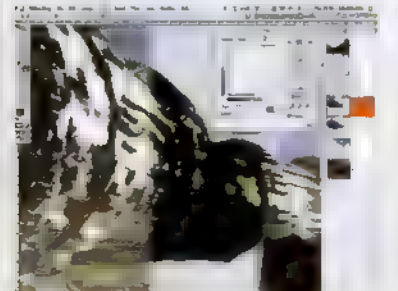


## 17 Bringing it all together

In Photoshop, I load all of the renders in and start copying and pasting the various Alphas (distance and object) into the Channels palette. These are then used to select the various scene elements, which can then be cut or isolated on duplicated layers. The atmospheric haze is simply made of a couple of gradient layers, which are then 'screened' over the lower layers. The illusion of greater depth can be attained quite quickly using this method. I copy and paste the planets render into the scene, with its Layer mode set to screen. Once positioned, I use the ship's Object Mask to cut away any of the planet image I don't need.

## 18 Final touches

Before flattening and adding the final touches – to tweak the contrast, colour balance and levels – I want to make the highlighted metal areas of the ship stand out more, with a sense of glow. To do this, I create a duplicate of the ship's layer, and use the curves function to squash out most mid-light levels, leaving only selected high contrast light and shadow. I then desaturate this layer, and re-colour it a light tint of yellow globally with the Selective Colour function. This layer is then blurred using Gaussian Blur set to five per cent. I then duplicate this layer, alter its colour to a more magenta shade, and apply a second blur. Both these layers are set to Linear Dodge, and reduced in opacity to around 35 per cent. This creates a sun-glow effect to help make those areas pop out.



# FX TOP Ten

## ESSENTIAL ART SKILLS

**Bobby Chiu** introduces his top ten fundamentals that every digital artist should bear in mind. Forget these at your peril!

### 10 THINKING AHEAD

In order to start an image off on the right foot, it's

important to know where it's headed. When I started this creature, for example, I lay down base tones with an idea of what its final color would be. The musculature in the final image was present in the sketching stage. Having a solid plan for a painting ensures that my image will maintain uniformity throughout the painting process.



What do you think? Do you agree with Bobby? Do you have any tips of your own? Go to [www.fx.com](http://www.fx.com)



### 9 COMPOSITION

Composition begins with good lighting and spacing the areas of prominence as visually weight and positioned to draw the viewer's attention. In this image, the viewer's drawn to the dog's head first due to its size and position in the middle of the piece. The dog's eyes as well as the boy are both pointing the viewer to the next thing I want to show which is the man, who is in turn pointing at the bike. At the end of this 'tour' of my image the viewer will retrace their steps until they piece together the



## LIGHT AND SHADOW

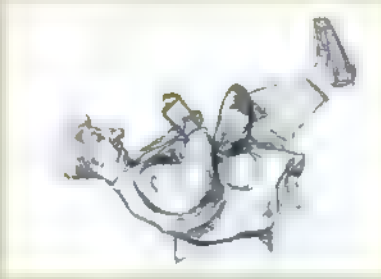
# 8

When applying light and shadow, focus on which sides would catch most of the light, some of the light (possibly from reflection), and none of the light. The outward sides of this girl's arms catch the most light while the leeward sides get more shadow, establishing the location of the light source. It's important to constantly remind yourself where the light is coming from as you paint.



## 6 LINE QUALITY

Lines typically indicate light while darker lines are used as a structure descends into shadow. Compare the quality of the lines at the top of the woman's head, which is lit as opposed to those on her mouth, which is shadowed by her nose. Lines also define structures. The darker and sharper a line is, the stronger your commitment to position of a structure. Build your shapes using soft, fuzzy lines to establish light and shadow and then commit to dark lines later. Starting with dark, heavy lines leaves you little margin of error.



## 5 SILHOUETTES

As a rule of thumb, the best 2D designs should still work even with most of the information missing. So, one way you can gauge the effectiveness of a design is to block in the image so you see only the silhouette. If I design something that isn't identifiable through just the silhouette, I will scrap the image and start over again.



## 2 TENSION AND RELAXATION

Here are two images of a person yelling. As you can see, he's quite angry in both pictures, but which is screaming mouth communicates that the best? Straight, stretched lines show tensed, while slack, curved, or squished lines are more relaxed, so when the sides of his mouth are stretched taut, he seems much angrier and more frustrated. He's yelling so loudly that his mouth cannot open any bigger.



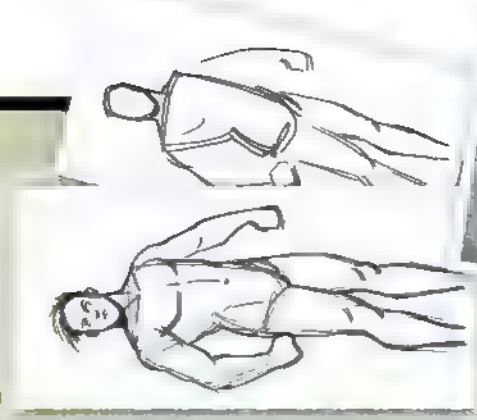
## 3 LINEAR STRUCTURE

Most structures, even if they have few hard corners, have a top, a bottom and four distinct sides. So try using boxes as guides for how the structure is positioned, where the front, back, and sides are, and so on. When you lay down these 'building blocks' in the correct proportion and relative position to each other, and pointing or facing in the right directions, the figure you draw on top of them will feel more solid and sturdy. It will have a stronger feeling of cohesive structure.

## 7 SELECTIVE DRAWING

When drawing, it's important to spread your focus across the whole image rather than a few certain spots.

I usually establish a framework for my sketch first, then break it down into large pieces that I can work on individually. This way, the entire image will show the same degree of polish and won't feel lopsided with one extremely well-drawn corner next to one that's oversimplified.



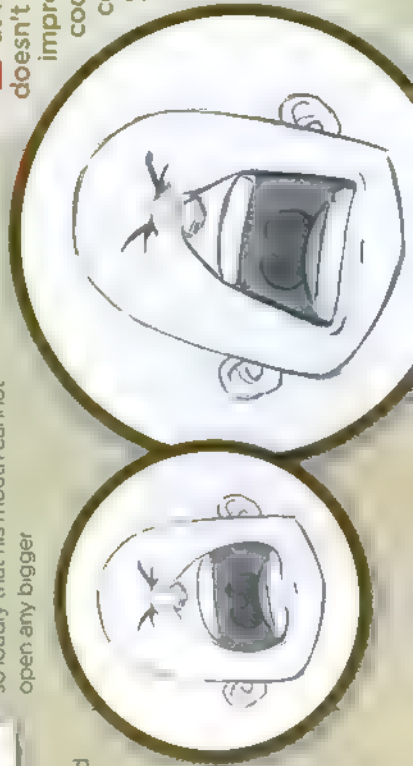
## 4 TONALITY

Start painting by thinking about tonality. The colour tones of the girl's boots and bikini are inherently much darker than her skin tone, for example. By staying conscious of the relationships between the tonality of structures in the image when compared to one another, you can more effectively build a good lighting and shadowing scheme.



## 1 BLIND CONTOURS

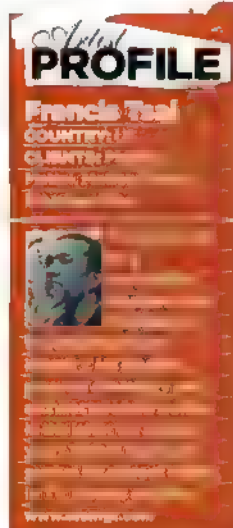
Blind contours are basically drawing from life without looking at what you're doing. Accuracy doesn't matter; the point is to improve your hand-eye coordination by making you concentrate on what you think your hand is drawing. Practise consistently and you'll find your hand-eye coordination and muscle control will dramatically improve, and you'll be able to translate what you see and imagine to paper more accurately.



Artist insight

# EFFECTIVE CHARACTER DESIGN

Character design involves many different skills, from analysis and problem solving, to anatomy and colour. **Francis Tsai** shares his design tips...



**S**uccessfully designing a character means utilising and combining a whole range of skills, as well as having some basic knowledge.

Put another way, a successful design comes out of a process that is one half design and the other half visual communication. The design aspect relies heavily on analysing a situation, formulating a design problem, and then

developing an interesting and elegant solution. The visual communication component depends heavily on basic skills of anatomy, composition, colour theory and the ability to communicate the ideas that come out of the design process. With that strategy in mind I'll work through some examples showing different ways in which ideas are communicated in different character design case studies.



## 1 INITIAL THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

This is usually the first step towards a character design. The main goal with this step is simply to **generate as many ideas as possible**, without worrying about editing anything out. There will be some interesting ideas, and most likely some unusable ideas. That's okay. Almost everything from this stage onwards involves **paring down and editing**, so for now it's good to push the boundaries and get as much out on the table as possible.

## 3 SILHOUETTE EXPLORATION

One of the primary ways in which we recognise a character is through its silhouette. This is the main graphic read of a character over and above details, textures and to a certain extent even colour. From a distance, textures and details are obscured, and lighting conditions can affect how the character's colour is perceived. Rarely will a character's silhouette be altered by environmental conditions.

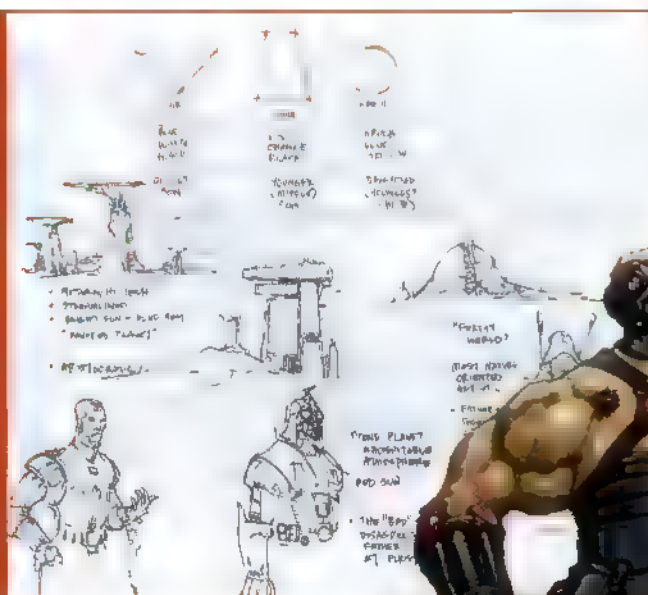
## 4 THE ITERATIVE PROCESS

Once we've had the chance to generate a lot of thumbnail sketches, we have many ideas available to sort through. This is the point in the process where we start refining, combining different elements and keeping the ideas that work and discarding the ones that are not clear or don't work.

## 5 SHARED VOCABULARY: OVERT REFERENCES

Sometimes it's useful to rely on visual cues and ideas with which people are already familiar and have certain associations. One example I've provided here shows a **super-cyborg soldier** type with a design that borrows equally from Nazi and bondage visual cues.

This was intended to create a **fearful and disturbing aura**, and relies on ideas people already have regarding certain kind of imagery.



“Borrowing from real-world cultures and religions for iconic imagery has the benefit of using shared vocabulary, but this usage shouldn't be arbitrary”

## 6 SHARED VOCABULARY: SUBTLE REFERENCES

In the previous example the borrowed visual cues were obvious, and very specific. It's also possible to hint at, rather than loudly state your references. In this sketch I'm referencing religious, priest-like figures by using cues, such as long robes, sacred writings and ceremonial garb - but I'm not directly referring to any particular religious figure.

## 7 ALTERED PROPORTIONS

With human and human-based characters in particular, altering the proportions of the body is another useful tool in communicating a character concept. Creating a character with a large head and small body evokes a different emotional response than a character with a small head and large body.



## 8 SHOW PERSONALITY THROUGH EXPRESSION

Another aspect of character design that's often story-based is the character's personality. One way to show some sense of that is to portray your character with some sort of facial expression that reveals an important aspect of that character's personality. It's not usually a critical design element, but it does contribute to the visual communication part of the job.



## 9 SCALE

An issue that's related to the area of body proportions is scale. A **piece of concept art** showing a lone character (unless it's obviously a human character) is often not effective in communicating that **character's size** relative to something the viewer is familiar with. It's usually helpful to add a human figure for scale.



## 10 PERSONALITY THROUGH POSE OR ACTION

This one is a technique that's probably better used once the basic character design is mostly completed. Showing a character in some sort of character-specific action is part of the visual communication tool set that tells the viewer a little more about the character.



## 11 CULTURE SALAD

The term actually refers to something you should avoid doing. Borrowing from real-world cultures and religions for iconic imagery has some of the benefits of using shared vocabulary as described above, but this kind of usage shouldn't be arbitrary. If cultural references are used in an appropriate manner and combined with other influences that they are not normally associated with, the results can be interesting and unique.

## 12 THE TWIST

Putting a twist on familiar character or idea

explore visual cues



## 14 UNIFYING DESIGN ELEMENTS

Relating one or more characters as part of a 'team' can also occur at a second read level where secondary details such as graphics, logos, costume colour treatments and so on can indicate to the viewer that two or more characters are related.



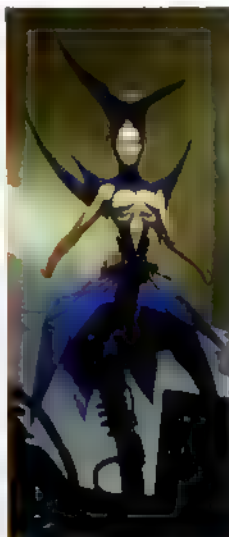
## 15 PROVIDE INSIGHT

Weapons are just one possibility, of course; you can **provide insight** into a character and create an interesting design statement by showing him or her with a particular vehicle, animal companion, or mystical equipment. These items **communicate** an aspect of the character by providing information such as what the character does, and how they do it.

## 13 PROPS: WEAPONS

Certain characters derive much of their identity from the equipment they carry – for example, many sci-fi characters are identified by their weapons and armour. If a weapon is unusual or prominent enough, it forms a significant aspect of the silhouette. Stylised, oversized guns and swords are the most typical examples, but with a bit of thought and research, this strategy can yield some interesting design statements.

**“If a weapon is prominent or odd enough, it forms a significant aspect of the character’s silhouette”**



## 17 KEY GRAPHIC OR COLOUR

One way to create a strong identity for a character design is to focus attention on one key graphic or colour element. Many classic comic book superhero designs rely on this strategy – a simple clear logo on the chest, which often serves as a design motif for their equipment as well.

## 18 USING COLOUR AND PATTERN

In addition to literal logos and symbols, **colour and pattern** can be used in a more abstract manner to subtly imply particular ideas or motifs. Using complementary or contrasting colours for **skin and costume** can provide an opportunity to create graphic shapes that can become a unique identifier.

## 19 FOCUS ATTENTION, BE DETAIL ORIENTED

Too much detail can kill your design; it's a common mistake to equate lots of detail with lots of interest. Similar to the way in which the comic book heroes mentioned above benefit from a single memorable logo detail in a character design should be used with restraint. The more areas of high detail you include, the less memorable each detail becomes.

## 20 SYMMETRY

Human standards of beauty usually depend on faces and bodies exhibiting left-right symmetry. This is a useful note to remember, even if in real life people rarely exhibit perfect symmetry. In the field of entertainment design, we are portraying ideals and extremes. Part of the task of visual communication is emphasising the message you want to communicate and playing down what you don't.

## 16 ATTENTION, VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Once your design is more or less final, there are a few **visual communication techniques** available to help you communicate the important aspects of your design. For instance, using lighting to focus attention on the key elements – such as logos, facial tattoos, costume graphics and so on – and enabling **less important areas** of a character design to fall into shadow reinforces the important parts of the design.

## 21 ASYMMETRY

If on the other hand you are including asymmetry as part of your design statement, it's better to be definite about it. The main thing to remember here is that making something very subtly asymmetrical just looks like you made a mistake. If you're going for an asymmetrical design element, make it obvious. This is again a visual communication matter – your message has to be clear to be effective.

## 22 SEX SELLS

This is an advertising adage that has been proven time and time again. However, I don't think 'sexy' can be the main concept for a character design, at least not for one that needs to have any sort of staying power. A **sexy twist** on something that's not traditionally considered sexy is more interesting – the 'sexy nurse' archetype is a great example of this idea.



“A sexy twist on something that's not traditionally considered sexy is interesting – the sexy nurse archetype is a great example of this”

## 23 THE SUBTLE, CREEPY TWIST

A phenomenon that's been discussed a lot lately in the games industry, called 'The Uncanny Valley', refers to the creepy effect that an almost completely human-looking character has on a viewer. Because the character is so convincing except for one or two little things, the viewer perceives something wrong about the character.

This is usually considered to be negative, but this effect can also be used intentionally to create a subtly creepy character.

## 24 THE TURNAROUND

Normally a character designer is also required to provide a turnaround or orthographic drawings of the character that show front, side and back views. The process of making sure details line up across all the drawings will often reveal problems in the design. On paper, it's difficult to anticipate every design issue, so doing the turnarounds is a good way to be rigorous about your design working in three dimensions.

## 25 THE ACTION SHOT: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

One very effective way of communicating a character design is by using an action shot.

Once the character design has been fully well developed, a major conflict or story point is introduced from a simple character design.





## PROFILE

**Alvaro Buendia**  
Digital Artist



DVD Artist

# ZBrush & Photoshop FETO LIVES!

Create a creepy-looking 3D alien fetus in ZBrush. **Alvaro Buendia** shows you how

**I**n the process of trying to come up with ideas for an original creature design, I sat down and started thinking and sketching concepts. It always creeped me out seeing pictures of certain fetuses, both human and animal, so I came up with the concept of a fetus of some strange monster-creature. In this

workshop, I'll explain how I created this image from concept to preparation to execution; starting modelling in XSI (but you can use any 3D app) re-sculpting in ZBrush, texturing in Photoshop and ZBrush, re-touching textures in Photoshop, rendering, and composing the final image in Photoshop, to bring the creature Feto terrifyingly to life.





CONCEPT

## 1 The concept

Behind any piece of art lies a concept. I make several sketches and try out lots of different shapes. First I play with the proportions, trying to come up with features that inspire horror and creepiness. I figure that one of the most horrific creatures known to man is the T-Rex, with its round eyes, sharp teeth, three fingers on each hand and three toes on each foot. Keeping the shape as a sapien, though, will make my creature look more like a human predator.

## 2 The proxy

After nailing my concept, I start with a proxy of the model in Softimage|XSI (but you can use any 3D app), only modelling one side and duplicating it as a clone, so that side will change if I modify the original. I merge both the original and clone sides. I make sure it's simple and all in quads, so ZBrush can open it properly.

## PRO SECRETS

Create a good concept



## 3 Exporting the proxy

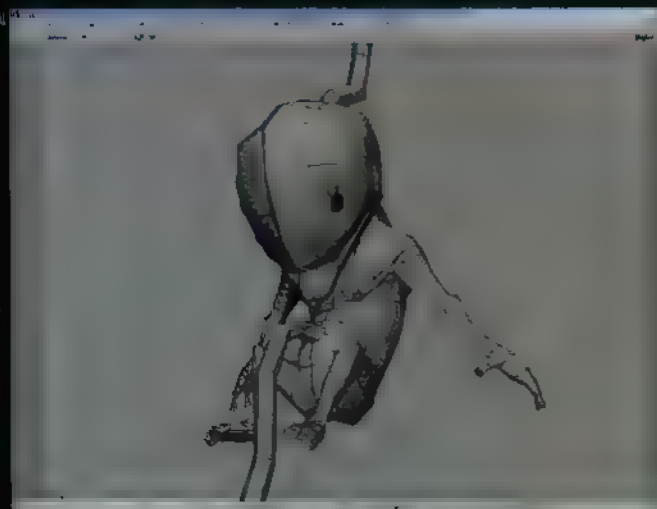
I export the model as an OBJ (this is on your DVD if you want to skip the modelling stage), and open it in ZBrush as a tool. Edit mode must be turned on.

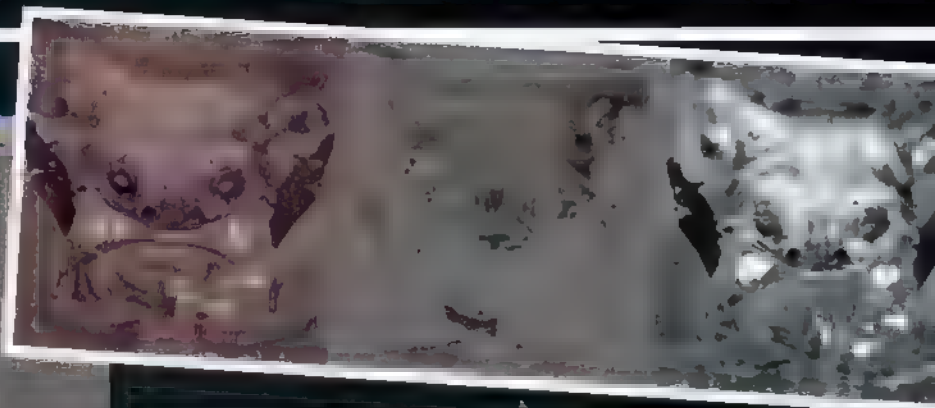
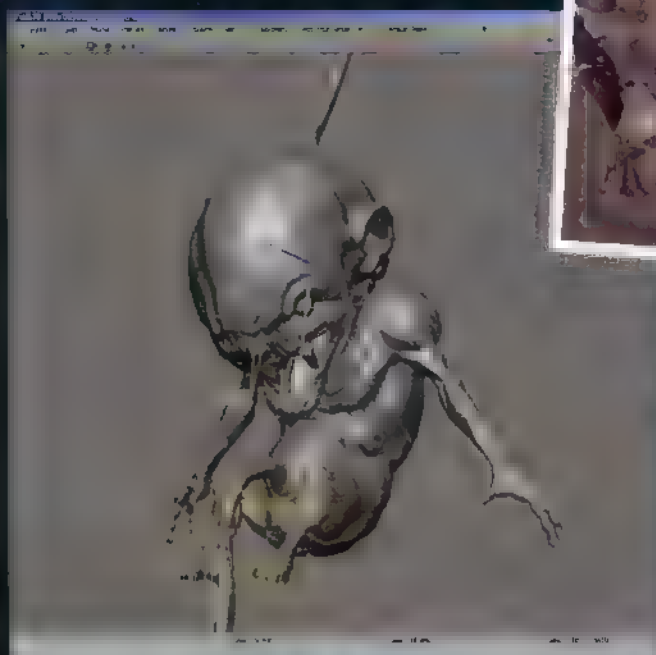
## 4 ZBrush sculpting

In order to have enough geometry to tweak, I bring the subdivision level to 2 or 3 and start sculpting. I like to use the Inflate and Layer tool to pull detail, and to carve detail I simply hold down Alt/Option. To define I use Pinch, and the Smooth tool to smooth areas I think are too pronounced and exaggerated. Before adding detail it's good to have enough references to make the model believable.

## 5 Retopologize

For this particular model I decide to bring the geometry only to level 2, and bring it to XSI to retopologize it, guided by the sculpting I did in ZBrush.





**Envelope.** Notice that the more time you spend painting the weights, the less you have to resculpt.



## Textures

After the character is posed and resculpted, I export the head and the body separately to ZBrush to do the Bump map. I recommend using actual pictures to create Alpha brushes; just grab one piece of skin that has some wrinkle or other specific detail, desaturate it and crank up the levels in Photoshop. Make sure the corners of the Alpha brushes are completely faded, as this will save you having to clean up the bump. Make sure you have the bump material only in ZBrush, so you're able to see the bump while doing it. Go to the Projection Master, and make sure you have everything but Colour off, then press Drop, and start painting the bump. Bear in mind you can only paint from one perspective while in the Projection Master, so you'll have to do this several times. Once you're happy with the bump, save the images as a PSD.

For the Colour map, I first paint everything in Photoshop, using the stamps I did in XSI and the bump from ZBrush as guides. After painting the overall piece by hand, I look for high-resolution pictures of people, grab a big chunk of skin, and patch it with the Clone tool in Photoshop. Then I put it on top of the texture, Auto level it, put it on Overlay, and play with the Opacity.

For the specular colour I just combine the bump with the Colour map, desaturate it, and play with the levels. After doing this I make some areas lighter such as the forehead and the lips, and others darker, such as the armpits.

Then I apply all the textures on the model. Normally I apply a subsurface scattering or Fast Skin Shader, as it's called in XSI, to give the impression of having different layers of colour in the skin.



## Lighting

For this kind of piece, I like to use Area Lights. They take a bit longer to render, but you get softer shadows and a more realistic look. For this particular

## Shortcuts



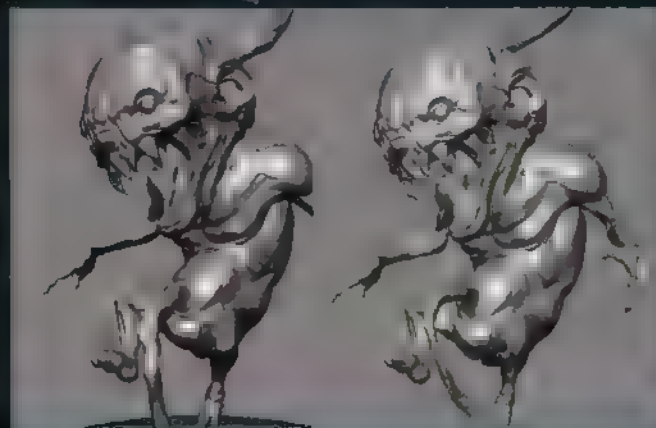
## Unwrap

After the geometry is done, I separate the head and the body and unwrap the UVs of each object separately on the Texture Editor. After the unwrap I merge both of the objects, creating a cluster. You select one cluster and go to the Texture Editor>Edit>StampUVmesh, then select the second cluster and do the same again. This helps as a guide to texture for the character.



## Posing

The posing in this character is made in XSI. I just grab the XSI Biped rig, under Primitive>Model>Biped-rig, which is a premade rig with default controls – good enough for posing. You have to make sure that your character is symmetrical. After adjusting it to the proportions, to envelope it, go to Animation>Skeleton>



picture, I used three Spot Area Lights. I make the Key Light a bit yellow, with an intensity of around 1.5. I make the umbra around .85 to get a darker result on the shadow. Once I turn the area on, I make its geometry a disc, and the samples 8 on U and V. To make the shadow wider I play with the scaling of the area. I make the Fill Light and Rim Light a bit less bright and change the colours, but I keep the same type of shadow.

## Rendering

For the rendering I use Mentalray, which is included in XSI (but again, use your preferred 3D app). Make sure the scan line and ray tracing are in 1 and 0, and the threshold is almost black (around 0.02). For the filtering I use Mitchell with a scale of 3 on X and Y.

I do three passes of renders: Diffuse, Specular and Ambient Occlusion. Once I've found a couple of different angles I render them on a big scale and play with the resolution scale. Make sure the Pixel Ratio is on 1, so the image doesn't get any weird deformation.

## Building the image

After rendering all the passes, I bring them into Photoshop. I always start with the Diffuse pass, duplicate the layer and delete the original layer. Go into Channels, select the Alpha, delete it to get rid of the black space, then put the other two passes on top of the Diffuse, and do the same.



Copy the Diffuse pass, and apply Filter>Other>Highpass. Bring the ratios to something like 1.1, and overlay it; this will make the bump and all the creases and details a lot more defined – kind of like what Sharpen does, but with a cleaner result.

Make the Occlusion pass overlay, and play with the opacity; this will make the shadows of the picture more contrasty and the edges softer.

You can also apply it on Multiply to make the shadows darker, and to give an effect of dirt.

Put the Specular pass on screen, and play with the Opacity; this will give the illusion that the character is wet, as it

would be within the womb. For the background I get a base photograph to simulate water. Then I get a bunch of different pictures and patch them together to simulate underwater movement, bubbles, and so on.

After that I go on Select>All, and Edit>Copy Merged and Paste, then blur the image a bit and erase some areas. This gives the illusion of depth of field.

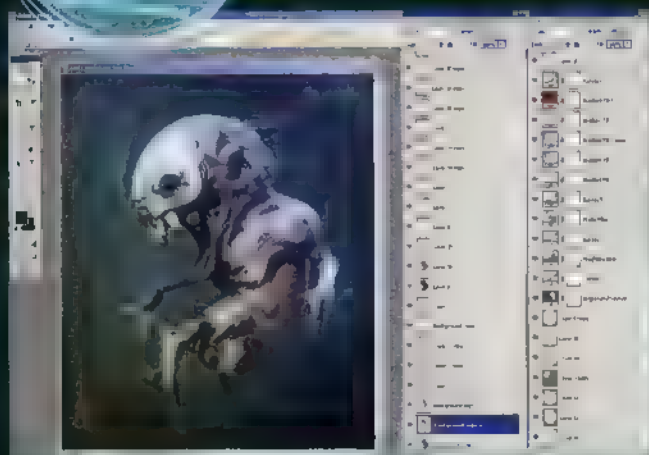
## Final comp

The only thing left to do is comp the picture. First I start adjusting the levels, to give it more contrast – it also can be done with Brightness and Contrast; this will also saturate the image a bit. Then I apply two curves, one just to make it more contrast, and another for colour correction. For this last one I go on RGB and tweak red, green and blue curves individually, then I put a photo filter to give it an overall blue tone, and make the blacks a bit bluer. To break up the colour and give the lighting a direction, I make a gradient for each light I make and blend it with a soft light overlay or screen.

## PRO SECRETS

Don't before you execute

## Shortcuts



## Photoshop GET TO GRIPS WITH PANELS

**Frazer Irving** explores the guts of the comic page and reveals the fundamentals for translating a script to art

**Artist PROFILE**

**Frazer Irving**  
COUNTRY: UK  
CLIENTS: Marvel  
COMICS: X-Men  
PUBLISHER: Marvel

**DVD Assets**  
The first you see  
are on your DVD

**FOLDING: 3D  
SOFTWARE**  
Photoshop CS2, Cinema 4D

**F**or this workshop I'm going to take you through the basic steps to creating a comic page from a professional script.

There are some fundamental rules about comics' storytelling that I often see lacking in the work of newcomers to the field, such as an awareness of how the western eye reads a comic, or knowing anything about leaving room for balloons. So what I am going to do is take you through the stages of working out ideas regarding composition, flow, rhythm, drama all in 'thumbnail' format, meaning the small scribbles that help the imagination get a grip on the subject.

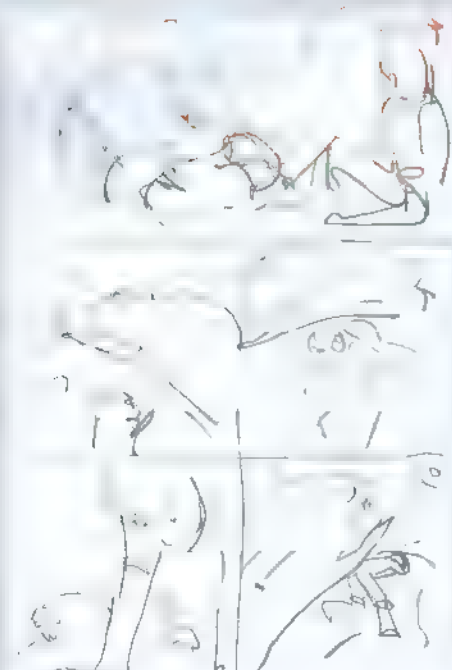
The first thing to note about thumbnail sketches is that they are not works of art. It is unwise to be even *mildly*

precious about these doodles, as this can impair their use to you and also inhibit any proper warming up that you need to do to get into a page

Consider thumbnails as being like stretching before doing some exercise; if you do it properly and don't worry about how you look when doing it, then you will be better prepared for that five-mile jog you're planning on

It's the same with drawing, especially something as complex as a comic, where fancy rendering is useless if the storytelling is dud.

This page is drawn from the script to Gutsville issue 1, written by my good buddy and evil twin Si Spurrier. The script is quite dense and prescriptive, though luckily there's very little dialogue



### 1 The first step

My first impression of the layout is pretty basic, though I have found that it is wise to use the initial simplicity of the first reading instead of trying to be too clever. I almost never overlap panels too, unless the action relates directly to the joined panel and needs some form of forced connection. Here I have chosen a simple layout based on the six-panel grid. If in doubt, the six or nine panel grid is a good, reliable structure on which to base your pages.

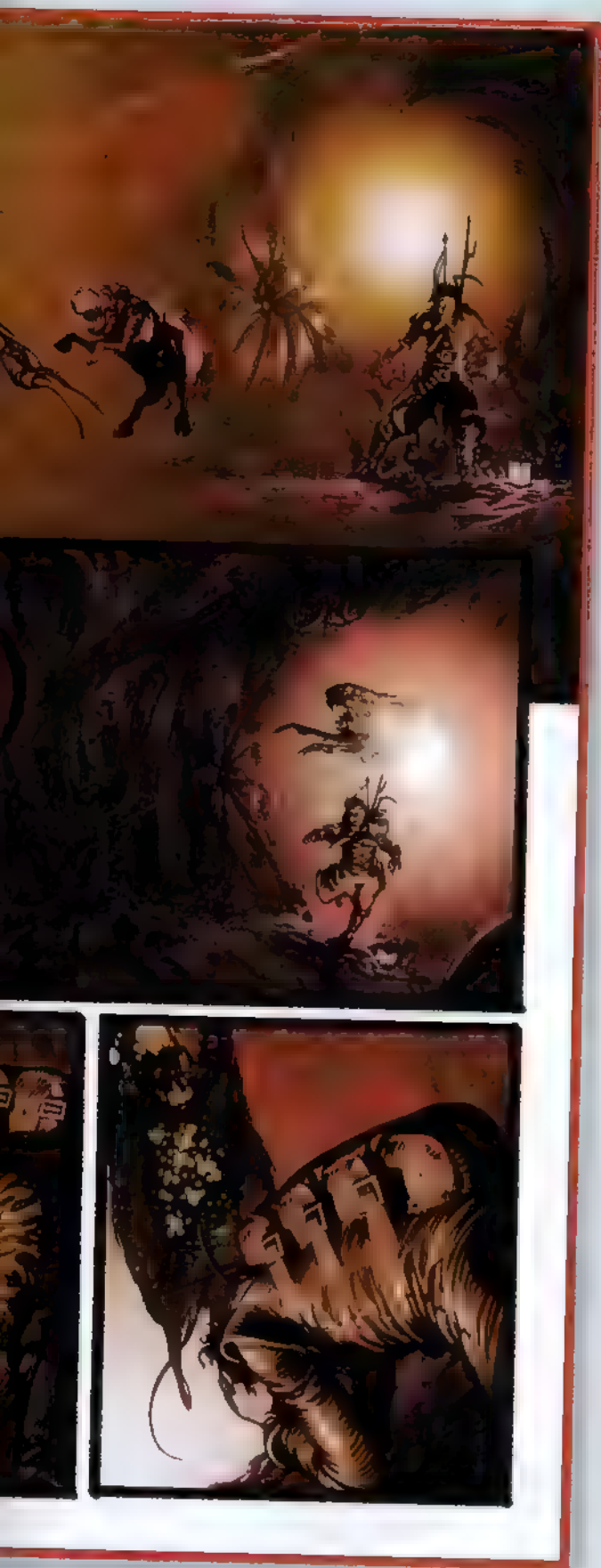
My main issue with the layout at this stage is that we seem to be reading the action in a right-to-left pattern, which is basically too much for one page. The basic beats are there but it needs fixing.

### 2 Alternative angles

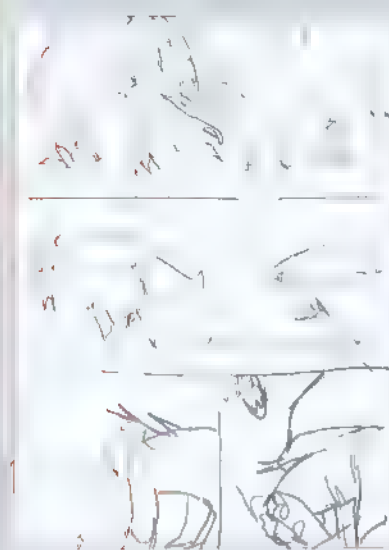
To attempt to remedy the reading direction I flip the panels so that we are now following in the gaze of Albert towards the creatures. The rat is also now leaping left to right in panels two and



# Quick technique Get to grips with panels



three, and I've also decided to try keeping the camera fixed on the last two panels to unify them as one action. What I'm trying to get a rhythm, where the main moments of action can be collected into 'beats'. The grid enables this to be done by having rows to line up similar events



## 3 Refining the vision

I try something a little bit different with this sketch. I had the idea that maybe panels two and three could in fact be one big panel that is either split in half by a gutter, or even left as one panel; as you read to the right, the events on the right hand side will have occurred in the reader's mind a split second later, just as in the script. Because timing is such a key factor in comics, you have to be aware of what the panel shapes are doing in this respect. Splitting these two panels apart does actually slow it down a fraction too much for me and with this new idea I'm suddenly feeling the scene a bit more. To balance, I reverse the opening panel so that Albert is on the right again, but he's also in the background, so we can focus our attention of the monsters instead. In this case our hero becomes almost insignificant, unnoticed in the panel, which echoes how the monsters see him. The last two panels are similar to the previous version, but I've made Albert notice the rat in the fourth panel so we can exaggerate his quivering in the fifth

## 4 Balloons

Now I refine it a bit, and we can see the action a bit clearer. Panel one is almost the same, though now Albert is rising to his feet so that he can get knocked over soon, the second panel is



now panels two and three merged into one and although the rat is moving left, that still works because the important information is discovered by reading to the right. I twist the perspective a little on panel two to enhance the sense of strangeness in the events that Albert is witnessing. I also rough in where the balloons and FX go as I'm relatively happy with the way the page is going.

## 5 Lines of clarity

Here I'm refining the drawing more, with clean lines ready to be 'inked'. The basic composition issues dealt with, I now have to draw my attention to the focus in each panel. Each distinct area of importance needs to be isolated from any others. The page now has three main beats, each a different tone; the first is the opening shot of chaos, the second is the whirling weirdness of the teleporting rat, the third is divided into two short beats that occur in a split second



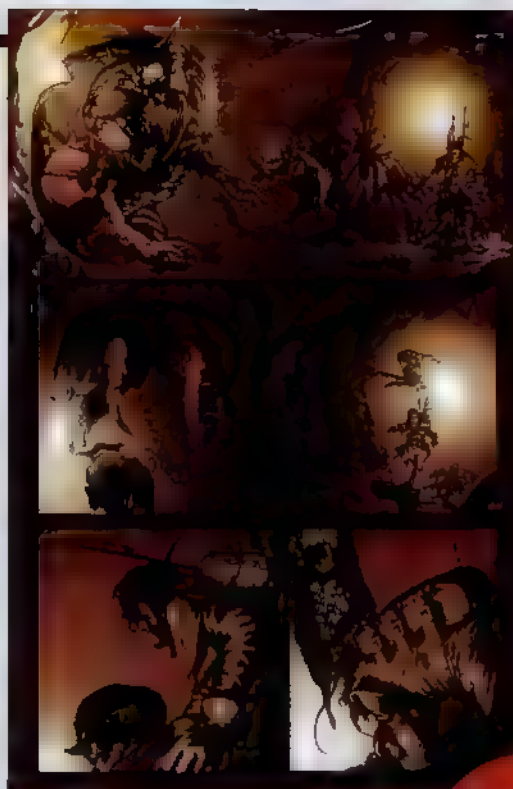


## 6 Adding the shade

Next I add the pencil details, happy that everything is in the right place and facing the right way. Now my job is to use the light and shade to draw focus and create mood, very important when telling stories. Heavy shadows frame important details and simplify shapes that the eye needs to read quickly. Ideally a page should have contrast and clearly identifiable elements within. Working it out at the pencil stage is critical because you have only two tones to work with and that simplifies each decision.

## 7 Basic shapes together

The next step I take is to add the coloured ground and make masks for the



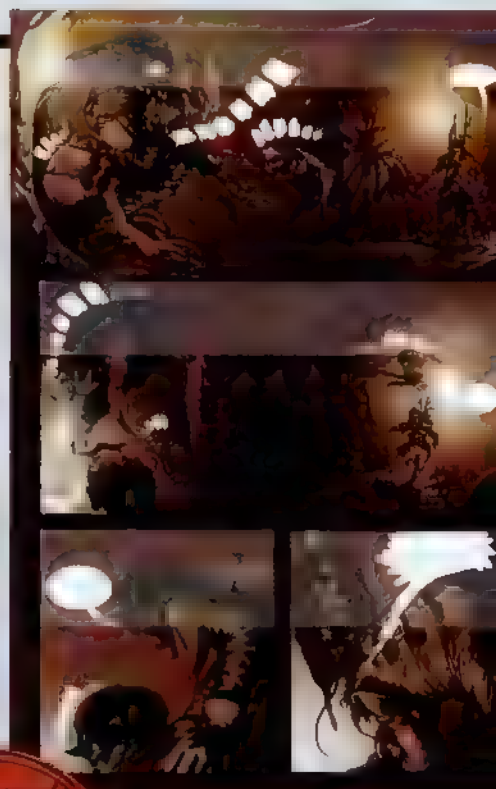
main elements. I add the balloon roughs to see how the shapes flow together. With such succinct dialogue as there is in this page, the flow becomes even more of an issue. The FX need to be read in a certain order, and the figures also need to be avoided. Treating them as objects makes it all a lot simpler.

## 8 Let there be light

Once I get into the colour stages (for I try to share the storytelling chores evenly among the lines and colours) I then lay in the dominant lit areas to enhance the focus. The reader's eye is drawn to areas of high contrast, which is why the heavy shadows and bright lights are needed here on the important sections. Note the added highlight details on the rat. This pops him out from the background, which is important as they do share similar tonal values. I've also adjusted the hue of each of the main elements to further separate them from the backdrop.

## 9 Space for balloons

A rule of thumb is to leave the top quarter of each panel open for balloons, but this is flexible. The placement once again is direction specific, so the balloons have to read left to right, top to bottom. This is why it's so important to get the reading order right in the beginning, so there is less fiddling to do at the later stages.



## 10 Final page

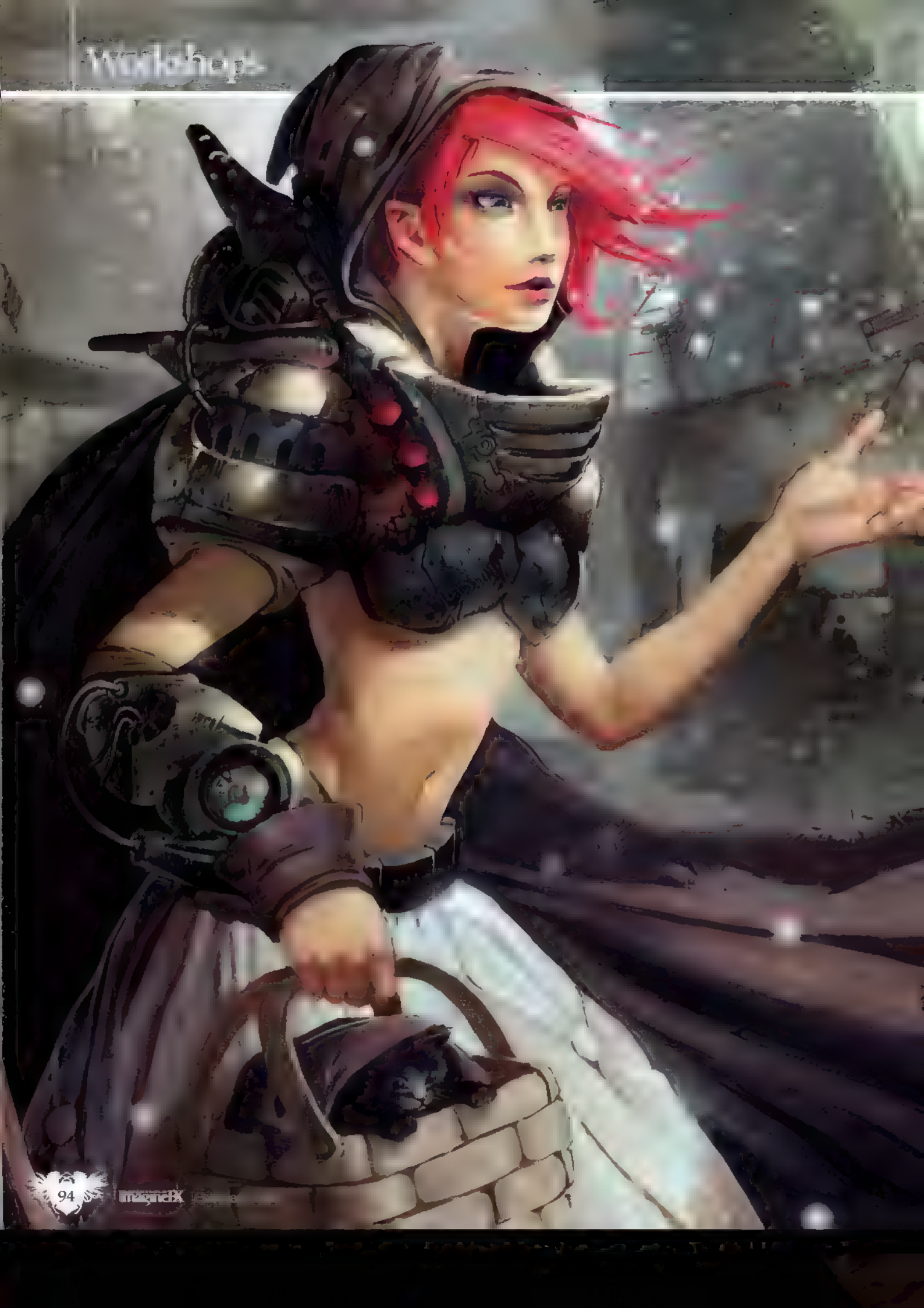
Here is the final page, complete with balloon placements. You'll see that I've drawn over the page to show how it should read, and the areas of focus that the reader will need. Even though the rendering has a fair bit of detail, I have tried to keep the actual outlines of the action quite simple and just create the illusion of detail in the rest. I have also added white gutters to identify the first panel as a moment of its own, and to avoid confusing the reader's eye by having too much darkness.

## PRO SECRETS

### Six or nine panel grids

The simplest panel layout can be the best. A grid of either six or nine panels of equal size, which will normally be set up as three rows or three columns, is a simple and effective way of presenting a story. In Jack Kirby's early *Fantastic Four* comic and Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, both of which are fine examples of good, clear comics.





## PROFILE

**Marc Brunet**  
Illustrator, Canada



## DVD Assets

The files you will find in this folder are:

• Backgrounds

• Characters

• Effects

• Props

• Textures

• Tools

• Tutorials

# Photoshop FIRST SNOW

Learn to design and paint a female sci-fi character as **Marc Brunet** explains the process he used to create his awesome First Snow picture - from start to finish

**D**uring this workshop you'll be walked through the process of creating this charming lady. My goal in this article is to help you pick up a few tips and learn something new that will help you improve your art in some way.

First of all, when I'm being tasked with creating a female character for a sci-fi scene, I start by asking myself what would represent this theme best. I really like the idea of mixing different elements in my pieces - it's always interesting to have various opposites in an image. For this project, I thought mixing a fairy tale with futuristic devices would give an interesting result. I chose Little Red Riding Hood as a basic idea to begin working from. I usually start with only that much information so I can

develop further as I progress; I find it to be a more entertaining process that way.

You'll need a good understanding of Photoshop and a pressure sensitive tablet. You should also have an understanding of the human anatomy, colours and textures before attempting this workshop.

Also, I like to use a variety of materials and fabrics, so knowing how to create custom brushes is definitely a plus for good texturing results.



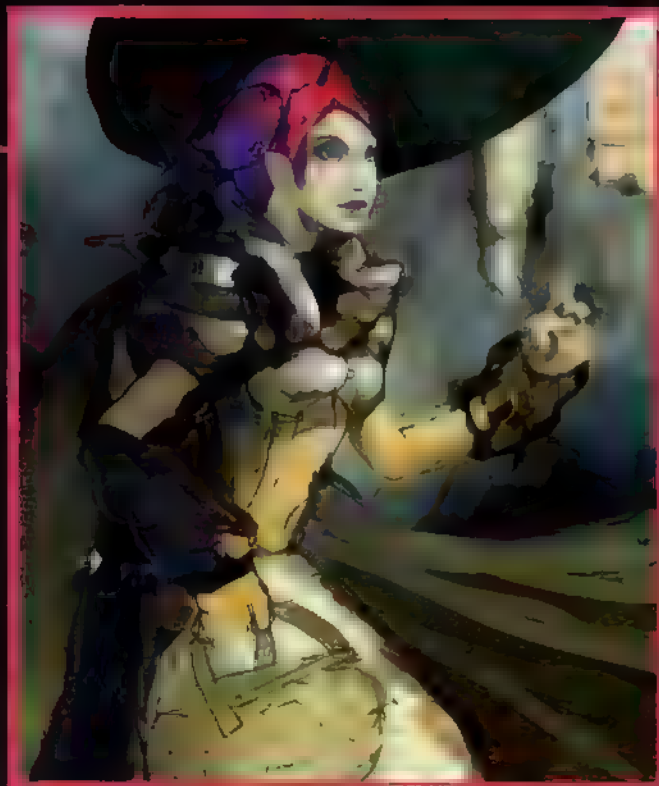
## 1 Sketching

I don't always start a piece with a sketch but in this case I want to get the design of the armour out on paper as soon as possible - it just goes faster if most of the design can be done at this stage. I'm painting on a canvas that's 3,400x4,800 pixels in size using a custom brush I created that tries to mimic traditional pencils. I'm not concerned about the colouring yet; the sketch is for composition purposes more than anything else.

## 2 Basic lighting

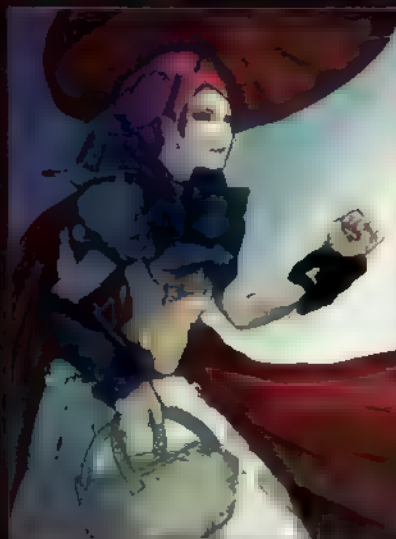
Now that I'm satisfied with my sketch, I proceed by sloppily applying colours to give me an idea of the colour palette I'll be using. I also set up the lights direction at this point.

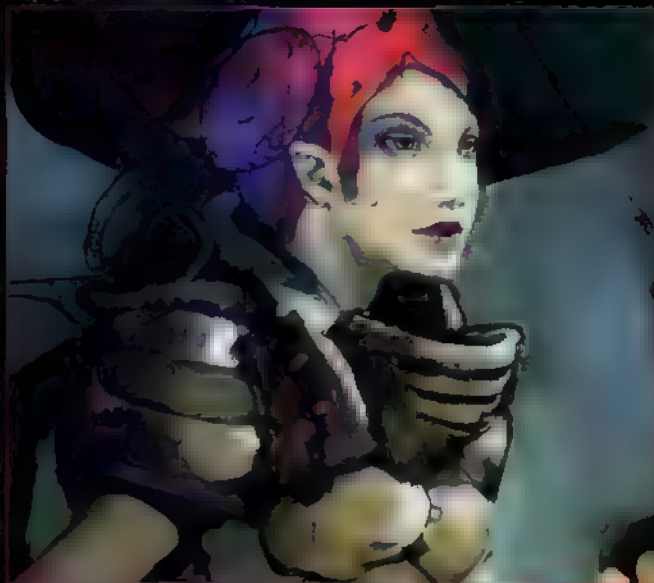
Next, I apply the colours over my sketch, so that I have a total of two layers for this project. You can add more if you feel uncomfortable but I like to keep it simple: one for the background and one for the character. As a side note, I'll be using a simple round brush with 25 per cent spacing and Shape Dynamics turned off in the Brushes Presets tab for most of this workshop.



## 3 Mood

I now set up the light sources. One will be coming from the right (the sun) and the other will be a subtle backlight coming from the left, to help separate the silhouette from the dark background. A warm primary colour and a cold secondary colour always work. I want a slightly desaturated look overall, keeping the saturated pink hair as a focal point. I also add a few brushstrokes to the background.





## 4 First detailing

This is the fun part. I always enjoy starting with the face – if I think the girl is cute enough, it'll get me going! When I start detailing my image, I try not to concentrate too much on one spot, but rather sculpt the whole image little by little. It gives you a better feel of the image as you progress and it's just more entertaining. It's easy to get bored with a piece, especially when you know you have to spend a dozen hours on it, so enjoying it by working on different areas constantly is important. Here the face is still pretty rough but you can see where it's heading.

## 5 Colour alteration

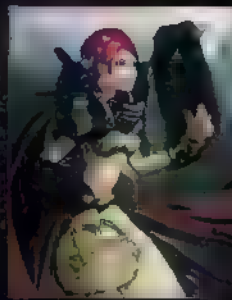
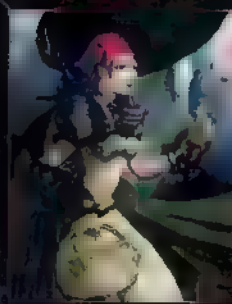
At this point I'm not too sure about the whole colour scheme; she has too much yellow in her skin, it looks as if she's sick. I add more blue in my colours using the Colour Balance tool and it already looks better. Yellow tones tend to make the image depressing and I want to go for a livelier feel. Adding orange-peachy tones in her skin helps get rid of her sick look. In this picture, I'd like to give the impression that the wind is blowing a cold breeze but right now, there's something wrong with the colours I've used for her cloak and umbrella.

## 6 Composition tweak

All right, this is much better! I remove the umbrella and it really helps the whole composition breath a little. Now it's obvious she's outside, in some kind of ruined city. I've tried making the cape red but I'm not too sure this was a good choice composition-wise. It draws the attention away from her face and has

## PRO SECRETS

Custom brushes



the eyes of the viewer wandering all over the image. It's okay to try to change elements in the picture to see what could work best, but be sure to save before you do any big changes in case you want to revert back to your previous version. In my case, I won't roll back. It's still early in the process and it's no big deal to just change the cape's colour at this point.



## 7 The dress, part 1

The folds in her dress are the tricky part. Painting fabric is no easy task and it takes practice and observation to get it right without references. I'm far from being a master at painting fabrics but I always try to incorporate a piece of cloth in all of my drawings – this way, I keep practising and improving. For this dress, I paint folds randomly using my restricted understanding of how it works. I would use a reference but the result coming out of it is satisfying enough for me as it is. What you do is set yourself attach points where the folds will start from, then, following those folds, you make them interact with other folds coming from other attach points. That's how I do it and it seems to work decently.

## 8 Metal texture

When painting metal you need to consider all the light sources, since it's a reflective material. I decide to use textured metal for her armour; I just think it looks cooler than flawless sheets of metal. The Colour palette for the metal is important here. Even though it reflects the environment, it's more appealing to the eye to throw in a bunch of other random colours. Seen at full resolution it'll look strange and sketchy, but from a distance adds to the richness of the piece. Simply using different shades of grey isn't interesting. For texturing the metal, I use a smaller brush and apply short strokes.

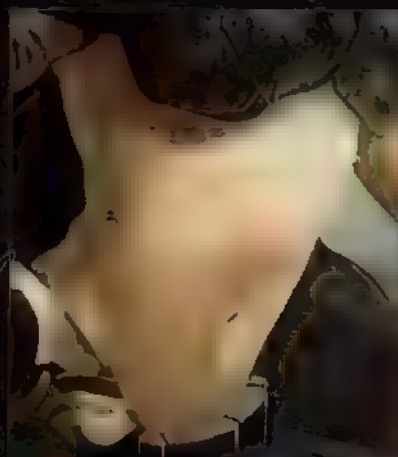
## 9 The head

Since I want the head to be the focal point it really has to be looking good, but it's been bugging me since the beginning. I figure I should change the design a bit and have her hair swirl in the wind to match her cloak. I also change the point she's looking at; she'll be looking at her left hand with a surprised expression. For her hair, I use the same round brush but with the Shape Dynamics option on, so the size of the brush varies with pressure.

## 10 Flipping

One very important tool that you should use as much as possible is the Rotate Canvas Horizontally tool. It gives you a whole new perspective on your drawing and a new critical eye. You'll probably see flaws you didn't notice before. I tend to use it every hour at least. Sometimes you might even want to leave the final piece flipped if it works better!





## 11 The belly

Her belly is yet another tricky part because I have to keep in mind the human anatomy while still giving it a style to match her proportions. It's probably one of the easiest parts to mess up since the smallest error anatomy-wise will show up right away. You have to consider the rib cage, the muscles and where the skin will fold in the given position. I also give it a slight backlight to give better hints of the shape.

## 12 The dress, part 2

While still keeping the same fold design I started with, I'm changing the fabric of the dress from cotton to polyester. It's just more appropriate for a dress! The difference is subtle but what I do is darken the dress using only the Lasso tool then go over all the folds, adding hints of blue here and there. The big difference between those two fabrics is the specular: the way light reflects on it. For polyester the shadows will be darker and the light reflection stronger, hence a brighter specular.



## PRO SECRETS

### Custom keyboard shortcut



## 13 The cloak

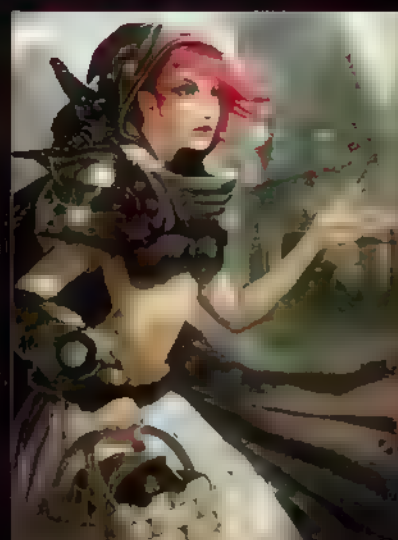
Because her cloak is made of thin leather, the texturing is important. For the holes, I simply erase using a custom brush. I try to give it a dirty look, so holes are good! I start by creating smooth folds with a big round brush. Once I'm satisfied I then consider the lights, adding some white where the light reflecting from the dress would hit the cloak. It plays the role of a second light source in this case, since it's so bright. I then take a smaller brush and using the same technique I used on the metal, I apply short strokes all over.

## 14 Fast background

For the background, as I mentioned earlier, I work on another layer. I want to create a ruined cityscape to match the sci-fi theme. Since most of the attention will be drawn to the character, I don't want to spend too much time on this. I start with the big elements, such as the shape of the buildings, and create a bunch of rectangles. Then I zoom in, add details and so on until it looks like it's far away in the background. I also give it a subtle blue tint to create an atmospheric perspective.

## 15 Greys

Greys can add a lot to a piece but they can also be a nightmare. When I colour pick from surrounding colours, it tends to desaturate the piece over time. When you colour with a lighter colour on a darker one, for instance, the resulting blend will be less saturated than the two original colours. If you then pick from this colour and repeat, you end up killing all the intensity in your tones. The only way to avoid this problem is to manually select the colours you want to use.

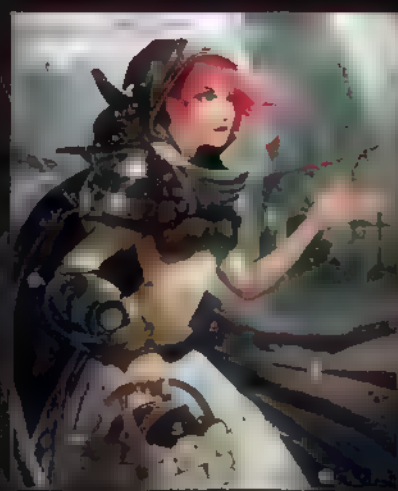


## 16 Further detailing

With most of the big components done, now is the perfect time to detail and sharpen the piece even further. I zoom in on the image at 100 per cent and scout the entire picture, making sure all the edges are straight where they need to be, adding little flaws in the armour, such as scratches and bumps, blending the colours to get rid of the sketchy/sloppy look, and finishing her hand at last. I also place snow flakes carefully around the image to add to the ambience.

## 17 Final adjustments

At this point the image is pretty much done. I push the detailing even further until I'm satisfied with the result. I save as a TIF, close the PSD I was working on and make the final adjustments on the TIF. All I need to do now is bring up the Colour Balance tool and change the intensity of blue and yellow to give it a cooler feel – it's snowing, after all.







## Henning Ludvigsen's SPOTLIGHT

Our resident Norwegian fantasy artist is back again to give a critique, and to provide valuable insight into one of his favourite digital paintings of the moment

Featured artwork **KOI BOI** Artist **JENNIFER THOMAS**

**T**he classic story of a great work of art beginning with a doodle on the back of a napkin is well known, but personally I've never actually encountered someone who's done it – until I met Jennifer Thomas. I really like the idea that a piece of art can start off anywhere, maybe a doodle at the local coffee shop, just like one of Jennifer's very charming paintings, *Koi Boi*.

What caught my attention with this piece is all the personality and attitude captured in the boy's face and posture. Often you can clearly see how an artist's personality and attitude reflects the outcome of their work.

"I completely adore combinations that are borderline surreal," Jennifer explains. "I think this is why it took some time for the fish inside the balloon to strike me as odd. I had a gorgeous goldfish to pose for

me. He lived long enough for me to reference him, and then died." This makes the piece even more surreal and special; the delicate balloon's purpose as a symbol that life is fragile.

The piece is very boldly painted, with a very rough and simple background and a warm and almost monochromatic colour scheme. Simplicity with a touch of surrealism is what makes this one stand out to me.

### Artist PROFILE

**Jennifer Thomas**

**AGE:** 28  
**JOB:** Experimenting with the fountain of eternal youth

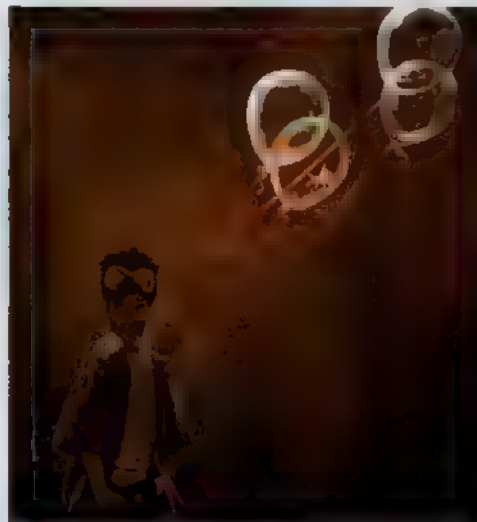
**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** John Singer Sargeant, Norman Rockwell, David Bowers, Malcolm T. Liepke, Phil Hale, and Ismael Medrano

**TOOLS:** Photoshop  
**WEB:** <http://direwire.com>  
**EMAIL:** [coinooperated@direwire.com](mailto:coinooperated@direwire.com)

### Artist insight: Jennifer Thomas talks us through her painting *Koi Boi*



**1** Using a Solid Round brush I made a loose sketch, really working on the face, as I tend to make that the focal point for most of my paintings. I decided I wanted more balloons, fish, and for the boy to have more of an attitude, so I scrapped this particular sketch to start anew.



**2** Satisfied with my base sketch, I start painting out the goldfish using a very simple palette of oranges, yellows and near whites, refining the balloons and adding reflections as I went. I wanted the fish to have the illusion of being serene within their glass bubble balloons.

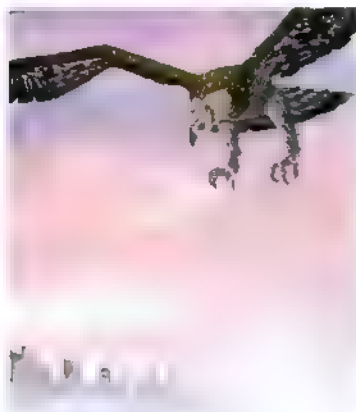


**3** Loads of light play and detailing here. I also broke up the background by using a custom Rectangular brush to pull the dark lower area up into the light. To finish the image, I airbrushed the areas affected by light and added thick textured brushstrokes over his clothes and body.

# FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews

The latest digital art software, hardware, books, training and film releases...

14  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



## SOFTWARE

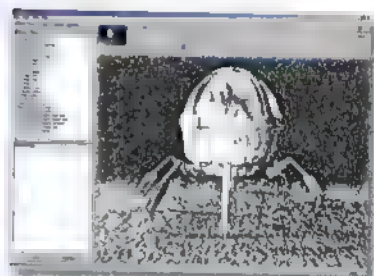
### 102 Bryce 6

What's new in the latest version of this landscape design tool



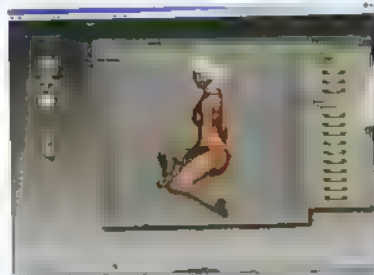
### 104 Alien Skin Snap Art

Get painterly effects with this Photoshop plug-in



### 104 Victoria 4

The latest version of Victoria, the top-selling Poser figure



Jonathan Allen Cummings on  
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### 105 Wacom Favo Comic Pack

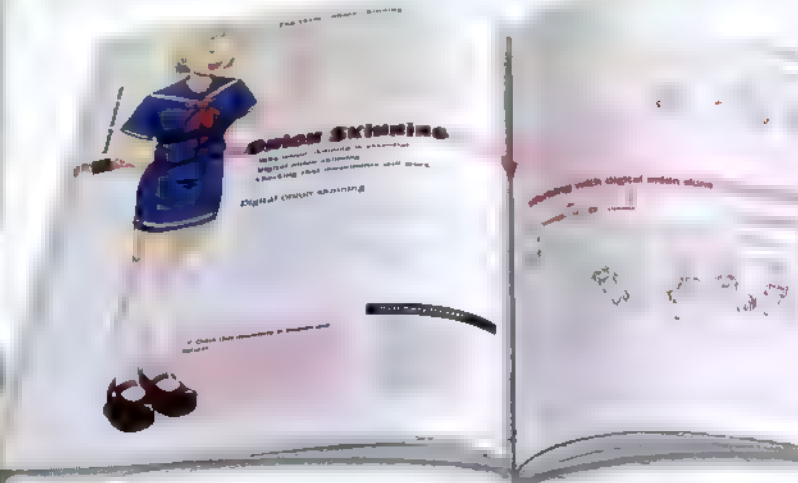
An inexpensive Wacom starter kit for comic artists



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“By the time you’ve read this you’ll feel like an anime pro”

RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious



Bryce retains its simple interface, but there are some powerful new features for version 6.

# Bryce 6

**LUSH LANDSCAPES** There's better lighting and more powerful animation in the new version of this powerful landscaper

**PRICE** \$100 **COMPANY** DAZ **WEB** [www.daz3d.com](http://www.daz3d.com) **CONTACT** via website

**B**ryce is probably the best-known landscape design package on the market. Its ability to create photorealistic scenery with a few clicks is well recognised, and its renders are seen in many images.

Landscapes can be created and textured with a click, and edited using Photoshop-style paintbrushes to build mountains and carve out valleys. Now, in version 6, those brushes can be customised to create unique terrains.

The package's built-in Plant editor enables the construction of a large range of realistic plants for your scenes and in this update, you can populate your landscapes with multiple trees using the new Random Scatter tool. It's basic and can take a long time to use, but it does enable you to generate more realistic foliage – and so on.

Version 6 also introduces HDR Image Based Lighting – which to those

not familiar with the more esoteric aspects of 3D rendering means scenes lit not from one direction by artificially placed lights, but from all around by the sky and sun, creating accurate reflections and soft shadows.

Animation is also upgraded with the inclusion of DAZ Studio (a very basic Poser-like application) and the ability to take animated figures and objects from there into Bryce.

All in all, this is a strong update to a major package. If you take the new features at face value and generate animations using 3D forests with HDR lighting you'd better have a quad-core processor and a lot of render time. The results, however, will be beautiful.

If you're wondering which of the many landscapers to buy, Bryce 6 is certainly a powerful contender but it would be wise to check out the imminent release of its competitor Vue 6 before any purchase. ■

## DETAILS

### Features

- 3D-landscapes
- 3D-objects
- 3D-textures
- 3D-lighting
- 3D-camera
- 3D-rendering
- 3D-animation
- 3D-effects
- 3D-sound
- 3D-video
- 3D-printing

### System Requirements

- OS: Windows 2000/XP
- CPU: Pentium 4, 3.0GHz
- RAM: 1GB
- Graphics: NVIDIA GeForce 7000 series
- Sound: DirectX 9.0 compatible
- Network: Internet connection
- Storage: 1GB free space

## JONATHAN ALLEN CUMMINGS

*Jonathan discusses why he thinks that the Bryce is right*

### Please describe your work...

I try to think of it as going on an adventure. I relax and don't set out to win any awards or to impress anyone.

### What's your method for working?

As I've seen time and time again, the 'best' art usually reflects how much pleasure was involved, and none of that has anything to do with rigid rules or typical work load pressures. For me, a picture is really never 'done' – there always seems to be room for improvement. I consider it finished only when it goes to print. Knowing simply when to say 'enough' can be the most difficult part.

### How do you develop your work once you've got the basic concept?

I follow my nose – instinct. If it looks like an interesting concept to me, then perhaps others might feel the same way. Bryce makes it possible to go in any direction your imaginative mind wanders in. I never set out to make a picture to wow, but it can be very satisfying when I stumble onto something, just the same. So in some ways, things come about by accident, and what may have started out as one thing, can end up being something completely different.

### Why do you favour Bryce?

Simply put, Bryce is easy, fast and more about getting the job done. It makes it possible to get a general idea mapped out visually in a hurry, and enables you to decide whether to go any further without having exhausted both time and patience.

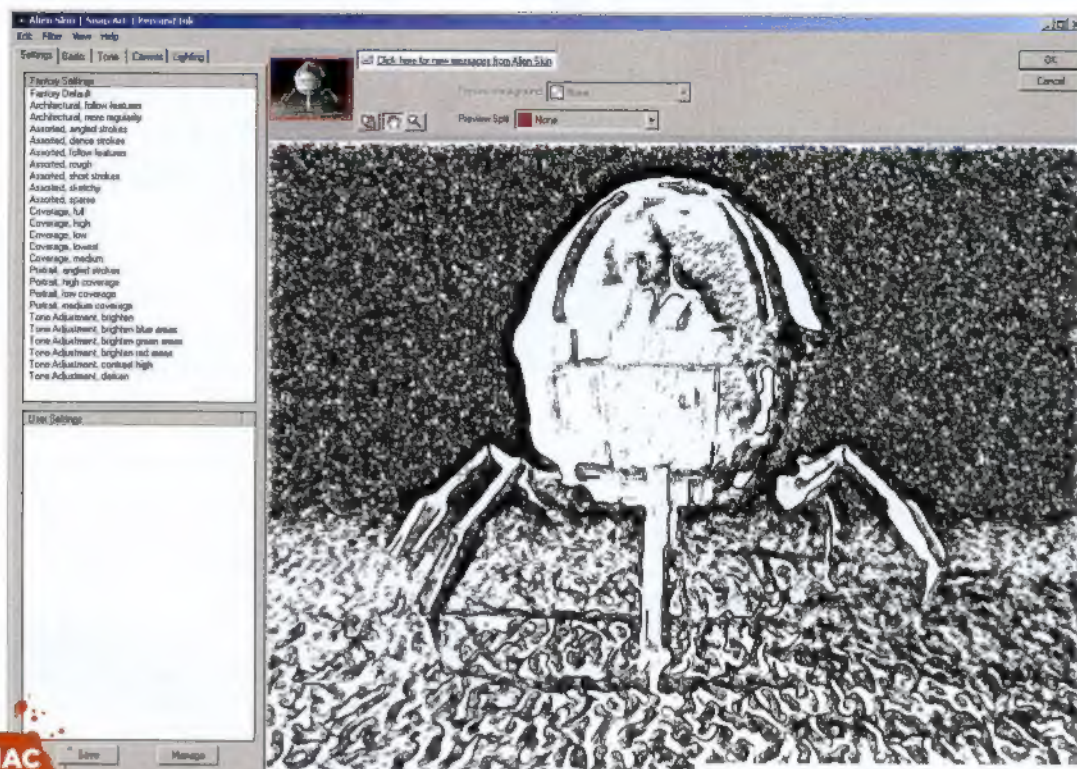
### What other software do you use?

I use LightWave, ZBrush and, perhaps most surprisingly, TwistedBrush.



To see more of Jonathan's work, take a look at some of the pictures in the digital art gallery on his website, below.

[www.shortcummings.com](http://www.shortcummings.com)



MAC  
&  
PC

The range of presets and manual settings is impressive, and the previews are accurate.

## Alien Skin Snap Art

**GO PAINT** Turn your photos and other images into hand-drawn art, from pencil drawings to comic styles, with these impressive Photoshop filters

**PRICE** \$149 **COMPANY** Alien Skin Software **WEB** [www.alienskin.com](http://www.alienskin.com) **CONTACT** via website

**A**lien Skin produces some of the most popular Photoshop plug-ins around. Snap Art is a bundle of filters all centred around the idea of turning photos and other images into hand-drawn art.

It's hardly a new idea and the efforts of most filters to do the job are usually greeted with cynical sighs by artists who see the work of brush and pencil as unrepeatable by mechanical means.

This isn't entirely fair. Firstly, it's worth noting that most non-artists take computer brushstrokes as the real thing without a second glance. Secondly, painterly filters are getting better all the time, and as long as they're seen as an aid to creative work rather than a replacement for it, they have a place.

The 10 different filters included with Snap Art each produce a different style, ranging from pencil drawings through to oils and comic art. Each filter

contains about 30 presets and a good range of manual controls. Refreshingly, the previews come out looking very much like the finished artwork.

The results are mixed. The Comic Art filter creates some great halftone and pop-art effects. The Sketch, Pen and Ink filters work well on certain types of image but tend to be fussy and you'll need to play around to get the desired effect. The Oil Paint filter is less successful, generally producing an indistinct, uncoordinated result.

The real problem with automatic filters of this kind is that artists make conscious decisions about what matters in a drawing – giving more detail to the eyes, blurring out backgrounds or bringing out specific colours. If you're prepared to put in this kind of work before you apply Snap Art's filters, there's no reason why you can't create imaginative and powerful work. If you just apply them without discrimination, you won't. ●

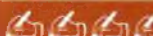
### DETAILS

#### Features

- Large range of presets
- Extensive manual controls
- Pencil sketching
- Oil paints
- Watercolours
- Cartoon drawing
- Many other drawing types

#### System Requirements

Photoshop Elements 4/CS  
Mac: PowerPC G4 or G5 processor  
512 MB RAM  
Mac OS X 10.3.9  
PC: Pentium 4 processor  
512 MB RAM  
Windows XP



## Victoria 4.0

### FIGURE MODELLING

Victoria's got it where it counts: better joints, hands, ears and... maps

**Price** Base: \$30; Complete: \$50; Pro: \$100

**Company** DAZ 3D

**Web** [www.daz3d.com](http://www.daz3d.com)

**Contact** via website

**Rating** ★★★★★

DAZ's Victoria 3 figure is probably the closest thing the 3D industry has ever produced to a megastar. She's the figure of choice for many Poser artists and has spawned body morphs, clothing packs, hairstyles, textures and more.

The Poser community, then, will be looking for Victoria 4.0 to be no less than the most photo-realistic, posable human figure available. In fact, she comes pretty close. The new Victoria has better joints – especially where Poser figures tend to bend poorly. She has higher quality maps and re-built hands and ears. Her eyes are new and now look superb and the Complete and Pro versions include (a few) clothes. Lots of head and body morphs and some high-resolution textures.

One criticism – Victoria 4 comes out of the box looking painfully thin. At a time when there's hot debate about body shapes, DAZ might have considered larger portions. ●



Victoria's new features include better bending at the shoulders and hips.



It may look sickly in white, but the Graphire4 is a bright piece of kit. And it's bundled with Painter Essentials and Manga Studio Debut.

## Wacom Favo Comic Pack

**BARGAIN MULTIPACK** Your chance to get all the gear you'll need without hurting your bank account - the ultimate comic artist starter kit...

**PRICE** £75 **COMPANY** Wacom **WEB** [www.wacom.eu/uk](http://www.wacom.eu/uk) **CONTACT** +49 (0)2151 36140

**T**raditionally, drawing is inexpensive, but as soon as you hit the digital world things can suddenly start to get costly, with graphics tablets ranging from a few hundred pounds to a couple of thousand. High priced hardware and software seems to be the number one deterrent from getting into the digital art scene; the overheads involved can feel immense and are rather off-putting to budding artists. Now it appears that Wacom has heeded the cries of the masses and put together something to counter this issue: the Favo Comic Pack, an inexpensive entry-level package opening many possibilities.

The Favo Comic Pack comes with an A6 Graphire4; not the most advanced tablet that Wacom has to offer, but one that is more than capable of meeting your artistic needs. It's not as accurate as the higher range tablets as it only supports 2,000dpi, but this is usually more than enough for any budding artist, bearing in mind that around a

year ago 2,000dpi was the standard for top-of-the-range graphics tablets. It has two fully customisable ExpressKeys, which cut production time dramatically, and a repurposed scroll wheel that's used for zooming in and out of your artwork rather than simply browsing the internet.

On the downside the specially designed Graphire4 included in this set is almost identical to the standard Graphire4, but has a rather unflattering white colour scheme that just doesn't suit a graphics tablet. It looks pretty grim, all told, but on the plus side at least it'll match your iPod. Mac users will also be glad to know that the Graphire4 and its bundled software are multiplatform and will run happily on your OS X machines.

The single most redeeming feature of this bundle is that the Favo Comic Pack is excellent value for money; the set bought separately would come to in excess of £100, so this represents a substantial saving for anyone, and as the package is sold as a single unit

### DETAILS

#### Features

- A6 Graphire4 graphics tablet
- Two customisable ExpressKeys
- Integrated scroll wheel
- USB powered connection
- 512 pressure levels
- 2,000dpi
- Two-button Tablet Pen
- Manga Studio Debut bundled
- Corel Painter Essentials bundled

#### System Requirements

- 24-bit colour display
- Resolution of 1,024x768 or above
- Windows 98SE
- Mac OS X 10.2.8
- One free USB port
- CD-ROM drive

#### Rating



there are no worries at all about compatibility issues. If you're just starting out as a comic or sequential artist, or are a traditional artist wanting to make the leap on to the digital medium, but you don't know what hardware and software you'll need, then the Favo Comic Pack is an ideal and inexpensive stepping stone into the realm of graphics tablet peripherals and applications. ●



The bundled copy of Manga Studio Debut is what makes this package excellent value for money, and makes it the ideal purchase for any aspiring comic artist.

The book is packed with handy tips and hints in every aspect of anime.



## Making Anime

**ESSENTIAL READ** Top tips for anime animators

**Authors** Chi Hang Li, Chris Patmore, Hayden Scott-Baron **Publisher** Focal Press  
**Price** £20 **Web** [www.focalpress.com](http://www.focalpress.com) **ISBN** 0240520459

**I**f you're an anime fan then chances are you've thought about making your own series. The digital age means it's not only easier to create your anime, but it's also easier to present it to a worldwide audience for little to no cost.

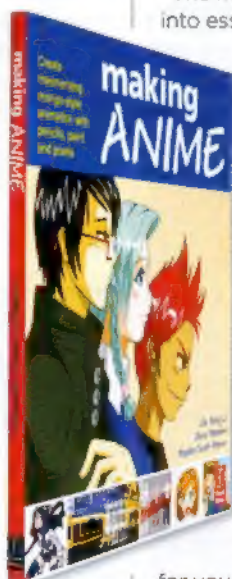
First you need a great story. Second, lots of talent. And third – a copy of this book. *Making Anime* is an overview of the stages needed to create your own mega-hit series. For any budding anime fan wanting to take their first steps into the world of animation, it's pretty much essential reading. The book begins by exploring the history of anime and manga. In Japan, manga and anime are not only viewed by children, but by all ages and types of society. It's not uncommon to see a businessman reading a manga on his way to work! And although this book dips its toes into some aspects of Japanese life, don't expect it to reveal too much detail, because it soon moves on to planning your animation.

If the audience can't relate to the happenings on screen then they won't stay around, and this book does a wonderful job of showing how to plan your film correctly. From how to format a script, to how to create a working storyboard and x-sheet, there's enough detail to make sure you do things accurately and with a professional touch.

The mid-section of the book dives into essential animation skills, and again is full of helpful tips, notes and images. It explains keyframes, tweens, onion skinning, common anime actions and more. The later stages of the book go into more detail on anime-specific skills such as cel shading and visual grammar, before moving on to the programs available and post-production tips.

By the time you've read this book you'll feel like an anime pro. If you've already created your own anime then the chances are this book won't have much new for you, but it has enough advice to inspire anyone to put pen to paper (or pen to tablet).

**RATING**



## Further reading...

Beautifully illustrated astronomy, create a 3D world, and make your own web comic

**50 Years in Space** – What we thought then... What we know now  
**Astronomy in beautiful detail**



**Authors** David A Hardy and Patrick Moore  
**Publisher** AAPPL  
**Price** £13  
**Web** [www.aappl.com](http://www.aappl.com)  
**ISBN** 1904332609  
**RATING**

A fascinating book exploring the solar system and outer stars. The artwork by David A Hardy is both educated and interesting; it's easy to imagine yourself standing on the worlds he has depicted. A great read and visual feast.

**Creating 3D Worlds**  
Create a realistic landscape in no time



**Author** Simon Danaher  
**Publisher** ILEX Press  
**Price** £18  
**Web** [www.ilex-press.com](http://www.ilex-press.com)  
**ISBN** 1904705782  
**RATING**

If you're looking for a quick way to produce a photo-realistic landscape image, 3D applications such as Bryce and Cinema 4D should be your first choice. This book is a great resource for anyone new to landscape rendering, and covers all the necessary details.

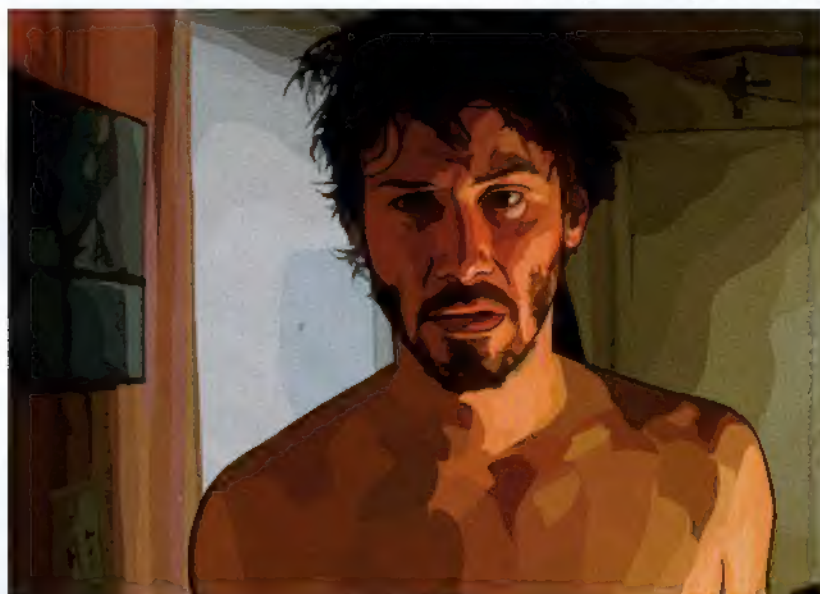
**Webcomics**  
Exploring the world of online comics



**Authors** Steven Withrow and John Barba  
**Publisher** ILEX Press  
**Price** £18  
**Web** [www.ilex-press.com](http://www.ilex-press.com)  
**ISBN** 1904705502  
**RATING**

Creating a digital comic is a fast and relatively cheap way of getting your work seen by a large audience. Strike the right cord and you can create an overnight hit seen by users worldwide. This book explores the world of online comics, delving into the techniques used by artists to create one successfully. ●

A Rotoscoped Keanu Reeves stars as a cop whose mind has been messed up by Substance D.



## A Scanner Darkly

**BLAME THE D** An undercover narc struggles to crack the supply chain of Substance D in this Rotoscoped hit

**Distributor** Warner Home Video **Certificate** 15 **Price** £18 **Release** 22 January

**T**he writings of cult science fiction author Philip K Dick were crammed with audacious ideas and reality shifts. Drugs were a recurring theme in his tales, and one of his druggiest novels, *A Scanner Darkly*, has been brought to life audaciously here by Richard Linklater.

Keanu Reeves stars as Bob Arctor, a narc who's deeply ensconced in an undercover assignment. Living with a pair of stoners (played by Robert Downey Jr and Woody Harrelson), Arctor's trying to work his way up the supply chain for Substance D, a drug that causes an imbalance between the right and left sides of the brain.

Thanks to a Scramble Suit, which conceals his true identity, even Arctor's colleagues don't know which of their surveillance subjects he is. And the brain-fried cop's been taking so much Substance D that he himself

isn't sure whether he's a drug dealer posing as a narc...

So far, so far out. But it's the execution that's really mind-bending. As with one of his previous films (*Waking Life*), Linklater first filmed his actors, then had it Rotoscoped, essentially painting over every frame.



Rotoscoping in itself is nothing new; Ralph Bakshi used it in the 1970s for his animated adaptation of the *Lord of the Rings* story. But what Linklater has achieved is greater than that: he's successfully turned it from a posh version of tracing into a legitimate artform. The end result is bafflingly alienating: you know you're

watching actors; at the same time, you know you're *not* – perfect for a story like this. Your poor grey matter ends up feeling as conflicted as Bob Arctor's. It's a great way of placing you into the perspective of a paranoid... and it's pretty, too.

**RATING**

## Other new releases...

Clive Owen tries to save humanity, and M Night Shyamalan plays the messiah



### Children of Men

**Distributor** Universal Pictures Video

**Certificate** 15

**Price** £20

**Release date** 15 January

**RATING**

Star Clive Owen said that *Children of Men* wasn't a science fiction film – curious, since it takes place in 2027! You can kinda see his point, though. This isn't an outlandish tale; it's set in a sideways world of tomorrow's tabloid headlines.

Humanity has become inexplicably infertile; there hasn't been a birth for 18 years. Britain is a dystopian nightmare of bomb blasts and immigration panic. Owen's character, tasked with accompanying a young woman on her journey to a safe haven, is shocked to discover she's pregnant...

Intense care has clearly gone into every frame, which makes *Children's* chaotic landscape utterly convincing. You can practically taste the smoke catching the back of your throat, and then ends up feeling more like a documentary than a work of fiction.



### Lady in the Water

**Distributor** Warner Home Video

**Certificate** 12

**Price** £18

**Release date** 15 January

**RATING**

The career of writer/director M Night Shyamalan has been slowly getting weirder and weirder, but it's hard to imagine he'll top the sheer oddness of this misconceived bedtime story-style fable. Following apartment block superintendant Paul Giamatti as he discovers magical entity Bryce Dallas Howard in the block's swimming pool, it's a low-key character drama that punctuates its long, frustrating scenes about storytelling and loss with occasional jump-out-of-your-seat moments. The rules of the plot change every five



minutes, the screenplay is agonisingly self-referential, and Shyamalan himself plays a modern-day messiah. However, though bewildering, it's a weird admirable failure, with some beautiful visuals.